

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

TUESDAY, 4 JULY 2017

Councillors Present: Steve Ardagh-Walter, Pamela Bale, Jeremy Bartlett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Paul Bryant, Anthony Chadley, Keith Chopping, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, James Cole, Jason Collis, Lee Dillon, Lynne Doherty, Billy Drummond, Adrian Edwards, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, James Fredrickson, Dave Goff, Nick Goodes, Manohar Gopal, Clive Hooker, Carol Jackson-Doerge (Vice-Chairman), Marigold Jaques, Graham Jones, Rick Jones, Tony Linden, Mollie Lock, Alan Macro, Tim Metcalfe, Ian Morrin, Graham Pask, Anthony Pick, James Podger, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb (Chairman), Emma Webster and Laszlo Zverko

Also Present: Joanne Bassett (Public Relations Assistant), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Martin Dunscombe (Communications Manager), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), Honorary Alderman Royce Longton (Honorary Alderman), Gabrielle Mancini (Group Executive - Conservatives) and Honorary Alderman Andrew Rowles (Honorary Alderman)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Peter Argyle, Councillor Richard Crumly, Councillor Mike Johnston, Councillor Alan Law, Councillor Garth Simpson, Councillor Richard Somner and Councillor Virginia von Celsing

Councillors Absent: Councillor Howard Bairstow, Councillor Rob Denton-Powell, Councillor Paul Hewer and Councillor Gordon Lundie

PART I

23. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Jason Collis to the Council.

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had attended 25 events since the last Council meeting.

The Chairman was also delighted to report on the success of the recent Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum which was held on Thursday 22 June 2017. He noted that 50.1% of the electorate turned out and 88.8% voted in favour of the plan. He suggested that this was a perfect example of local democracy, with the community helping shape local housing for the future.

24. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 09 May 2017 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion of the following amendment which was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Councillor Graham Jones:

Item 10, Proposed New Model for Scrutiny, Page 12 –

“He also stated that the decision to increase the threshold for calling items in from four to five hampered the ability to hold the Executive to account.” *Post meeting note: The threshold for calling items in has remained at five since the Constitution was introduced in 2001.*

Councillor Alan Macro commented that the amendment accorded with his recollection of what he said at the meeting and he apologised for inadvertently misleading Members.

COUNCIL - 4 JULY 2017 - MINUTES

25. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

26. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented at the meeting.

27. **Public Questions**

A full transcription of the public question and answer session is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

- a) *A question standing in the name of Ms Judith Bunting on the subject of the provision of sprinklers in schools, social and affordable housing developments and high rise blocks was answered in full by the Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Leisure but as Ms Bunting was unable to attend the meeting she would receive a written response.*
- b) *A question standing in the name of Mr Simon Pike on the subject of the methodology and data the Council used to predict reductions in the electorate in some polling places when they made their submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission in December 2016 was answered by the Leader of the Council.*
- c) *A question standing in the name of Mr Simon Pike on the subject of ward patterns was answered by the Leader of the Council.*
- d) *A question standing in the name of Mr Tony Vickers on the subject of the impact of the revisions to district wards on town council wards was answered by the Leader of the Council.*

28. **Membership of Committees**

The Monitoring Officer advised of the following changes to the membership of Committees since the previous Council meeting:

Governance and Ethics Committee

Councillor Jason Collis had replaced Councillor Garth Simpson as a substitute on the Governance and Ethics Committee.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

Councillor Jason Collis had replaced Councillor Garth Simpson as a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

29. **Licensing Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Licensing Committee had not met.

30. **Personnel Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Personnel Committee had not met.

31. **Governance and Ethics Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Governance and Audit Committee had met on 19 June 2017.

32. **District Planning Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the District Planning Committee had not met.

COUNCIL - 4 JULY 2017 - MINUTES

33. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission had met on 16 May 2017.

34. Local Government Boundary Review (C3319)

(Councillor Mollie Lock left the meeting at 7.32pm)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 13) which sought to update Members in relation to the review of the district's boundaries and to alert them to the need to review some of the previously approved warding patterns based on greater clarity of the projections used to inform the predicted total number of electors.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Graham Jones and seconded by Councillor Lee Dillon:

That the Council:

1. "rescind the decision of Council on 23 March 2017 in relation to proposed new warding patterns and new ward names, in accordance with the Council Rules of Procedure 4.9 and 4.16.
2. submit the new warding patterns and names (Appendix C refers) to the Local Government Boundary Commission in accordance with Phase 2 of the Boundary Review based on a further review of the electorate forecast figures.
3. notwithstanding the proposed changes, reaffirm that it would still like the Local Government Boundary Commission to look at whether the Greenham Ward should be two single Member Wards based on a view that there would be two distinct communities of the Racecourse development and the proposed new Sandleford development."

Councillor Graham Jones thanked the Members of the Working Party and Officers for supporting this process. He noted that Map 26 referred to the Tilehurst/Calcot Ward but that it should make reference to Tilehurst South and Holybrook. Councillor Jones commented that forecasting the future was not an exact science and these predictions were based on a range of assumptions.

Councillor Jones explained that since the submission of the forecast figures in December 2016 there had been a number of factors that had led the Council to have to review them. The original number of elector figures was taken as at September 2016. The ratio applied to future electors per household was 1.75 at this point. Since submitting the forecasts in December 2016 the number of electors on the electoral role had increased from 124,492 to 130,217 and the ratio now used was 1.8. A further significant change related to the Lakeside development in Theale which was approved on appeal in February 2017 which would increase Theale's electorate by 585 electors.

Councillor Jones commented that the decision to reduce the number of councillors to 42 plus or minus one constituted a dramatic change. He appreciated that Members had built up relationships with their communities. To some extent it was easier to sub-divide urban areas as that was already the case and he recognised that it could be more problematic in rural areas. Rural wards tended to base their sense of communities on a number of factors including school catchment areas, shops, geographical features and arterial roads.

Councillor Jones stated that the proposed submission was, in his opinion, as best a compromise as could be achieved. He accepted that Members, Parish and Town Councils and residents might be able to come up with other compromises and he encouraged them to make their own submissions to the Local Government Boundary

COUNCIL - 4 JULY 2017 - MINUTES

Commission. He was sure that if Councillor Alan Law had been able to attend the meeting he would have made a case for the retention of the 'Goring Gap' community comprising Basildon and Streatley Wards. He also noted the comments that had been made in relation to the size of the Downlands Ward both in terms of its geography and the number of parishes it covered. He also noted the comments about the potential for joining the Hungerford and Kintbury Wards and making this a single three Member Ward.

Councillor Emma Webster also thanked all those involved in developing the submission but requested that the Tilehurst/Calcot Ward be renamed Calcot and Holybrook.

Councillor Graham Bridgman noted that at the 23 March 2017 meeting he had commented that a possible solution might be to include Beech Hill with Burghfield. He noted that his fellow Ward Member Councillor Mollie Lock, if she was present, would point out that the residents of Wokefield were upset at being moved out of the Mortimer Ward. He also accepted that the residents of Beech Hill looked to Mortimer for services. He recognised the validity of all these opinions but also pointed out that irrespective of which ward the parish was included in, the constituents would still be well represented. He encouraged the parish councils to submit their views to the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC).

Councillor Tim Metcalfe commented that the residents of Tidmarsh and Sulham were pleased to be moved back into the Pangbourne and Purely Ward in the revised submission. He also commented that he was very supportive of the decision to reduce the number of councillors, and, in fact felt that the number could have been reduced even further.

(Manohar Gopal left the meeting at 7.44pm).

Councillor Alan Macro commented that he was happier with this revised submission. Both he and the parish council had submitted comments to the LGBC commenting on the increase in the size of the Theale ward.

Both Councillors Macro and Bridgman supported naming the Tilehurst/Calcot Ward the Calcot Ward.

Councillor James Cole reported that the proposal to co-join the Hungerford and Kintbury Wards had first been raised by Inkpen Parish Council. He accepted that a three councillor ward could be deemed to be problematic but that on balance it represented a better solution for the electors.

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that once a decision had been made to reduce the number of councillors it was important to smooth out the tolerance levels across the district. He accepted that the results were not perfect but they were a good compromise and met the expectations of the LGBC. He noted the comments about rural wards and where they looked to for services but he reminded Members of the comment made by Councillor Webb at a previous meeting. The services would still be there and the residents would still be able to access them. They would also still be represented by a local councillor albeit that it might not be the same councillor as their neighbouring parish.

Councillor Graham Jones commented that he was ambivalent about the names of wards and he was not well qualified to comment on what all wards should be called. He therefore encouraged local Members, parish councils and residents to make their own submissions to the LGBC on these matters. He reminded Members that the Council was making a submission to the LGBC and they were responsible for making a determination on the ward boundaries. When he was involved in this process previously the LGBC had in fact based their decision on a minority report which they made further amendments to.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

COUNCIL - 4 JULY 2017 - MINUTES

35. New Arrangements for Licensing Sub-Committees (C3308)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 14) concerning a proposal to increase the number of members on Licensing Sub-Committees from three to four with no substitute required.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Graham Bridgman and seconded by Councillor James Cole:

That the Council:

1. “agrees that the Panel for future Licensing Sub-Committee meetings will consist of four Members with no substitute required.
2. agrees that the necessary changes be made to the Council’s Constitution.”

Councillor Graham Bridgman noted that those Members of the Licensing Committee who were in attendance at the informal meeting in March 2017 agreed, in principle, with the proposal to increase the number of Members sitting on a Licensing Sub-Committee from three to four (with no substitute required). The genesis of this proposal was the Council’s Monitoring Officer, Sarah Clarke, and he thanked her for her proactive approach.

Councillor Bridgman outlined the way the Licensing Sub-Committees operated for those Members that were not familiar with the processes. He explained that the substitute was required to sit through the pre-meeting and the whole of the meeting in case an unexpected conflict arose. Officers had confirmed they could not recollect an instance when they had to be used. The substitute was however not permitted to take part in the decision making deliberations.

This proposal would ensure that all Members of the Committee had the opportunity to sit and gain experience on Licensing Sub-Committees. It would also reduce the frustration of Members acting as substitutes who had to sit through a whole meeting but then not take part in the decision making process. He noted that as the substitute was already required to attend the meeting there would not be any additional budgetary implications associated with this proposal. He also noted that a decision could always be made as the chairman would have a casting vote.

Councillor James Cole commented that the matter had been discussed by the Governance and Ethics Committee who had unanimously supported the proposal. The Committee had also commented that as the Appeals Panel operated on similar basis, Officers would be asked to apply a similar approach to that Committee too. A paper would therefore come to a future Council meeting for approval.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

36. Notices of Motion

There were no Motions submitted.

37. Members' Questions

There were no Member questions submitted to this meeting.

(The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and closed at 7.58 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature