

PARISH CONFERENCE

TUESDAY, 3 MARCH 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Christine Bateson (Chairman) and Buxton (Chairman), Stephen Hedges, Ian Harvey, Des Warren, Ken Elvin, Martin Coker, David Burfitt, Amanda Robson Brown, Mary Cooper, Linda O'Flynn, Ruth Davies, Barbara Story, Allison Sharpe, Chris Graham, Taslim Gbaja-Biamila, Jane Clemance, Benta Hickley, Sandra Baker and Freda Boringdon

Also in attendance: Councillors Andrew Johnson, Samantha Rayner, Stuart Carroll, Gerry Clark, David Cannon and David Coppinger

Officers: Louise Freeth and Shilpa Manek, Duncan Sharkey, Adele Taylor and James Carpenter

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Both Chairmen welcomed everyone to the Parish Conference, especially the RBWM Cabinet Members.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brar and Stimson, MJ Streater (Waltham St Lawrence) and Allen Corcoran (Datchet).

MINUTES FROM LAST CONFERENCE

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2019 be approved as a true and accurate record.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Parish Councillor Anne Catherine Buxton informed the Conference that this item would be discussed in future agenda items.

MEET THE LEADER AND HIS CABINET (15 MINS)

Councillor Bateson invited the Leader of the Council, Councillor Andrew Johnson to address the Conference.

Councillor Johnson thanked the Conference for facilitating the opportunity to improve the relationships between the two strands. The first step was to work more collaboratively, innovatively and closely. The Leader informed the Conference that it had been a difficult budget to set with difficult and painful decisions but there were significant opportunities, saving provisions and transform services to protect the vulnerable. Since the budget was late, it had been difficult for Parish Councils to set their budgets. Both the borough and the parishes were working mutually together for issues such as biodiversity and climate change. Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council, Chairman of Cabinet, Business Growth, Economic Development and Property. The economic development in Maidenhead and across the borough, asset management, sustainable transport and affordable housing. Parish Councils would benefit financially from the housing strategy. The Leader invited his Cabinet to inform the Conference a little about each of portfolios.

Councillor Samantha Rayner, Deputy Leader of the Council, Resident and Leisure Services, HR, IT, Legal, Performance Management and Windsor; Armed Forces Champion. Councillor Rayner informed the Conference that there were eleven libraries, across the borough. Book loans had increased dramatically over the last year, highlighting digital services that were provided, encouraging our residents to sign up including an information point. This was an incredibly versatile service, across the borough. The borough had many sports centres across the borough with the current large project of Braywick Leisure Centre, opening on 5 September 2020 and using 70% less energy compared to the current Magnet Centre. This would be a great place for the community with a new art centre, including an incredible theatre accommodating 650 people. The HR team consisted of incredible staff who were doing an incredible job. The IT was going through a two phase upgrade, the IT was changing through the borough. All staff had new, modern individual laptops in order to work more efficiently and smartly.

Councillor Stuart Carroll, Deputy Chairman of Cabinet, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health and Mental Health. Councillor Carroll had a wide, interesting remit, providing services to vulnerable residents. For Adult Services, the borough was ranked in the top 50 councils in terms of Adult Social Care offering, in terms of high quality of care and lower cost of care. Councillor Carroll had taken over from the previous Lead Member and had continued to take forward a radical transformation profile to implement embedding the principles of prevention enabling independence. The borough had a significant low level, practically zero delays for critical services such as going into hospital or social care. This was thanks to staff doing a tremendous job in very testing circumstances. The borough were continuing to push central government to bring forward the long awaited Green Paper with respect to funding. In the borough, it should be celebrated that people are living longer but the challenge with that is the cost associated with people living longer. More long term this requires a solution in predicting funding in a consistent way.

For Health Services, the borough had an integrated care system with colleagues in the NHS such as the clinical commission group which was under the wider transformation footprint and part of the broader NHS planning initiative, in commissioning services together with wider NHS strategies. There would be more funding for areas such as mental health and prevention. Councillor Carroll said that he would continue to challenge colleagues as Chairman of the borough's Health and Wellbeing Board to find out where the funding would be spent.

For Mental Health, Councillor Carroll informed the Conference that he had been the mental health champion for a number of years. This was an area where as a borough more needed to be done in terms of awareness, especially to try and remove the stigma around it and working together as a community and being open, there was a lot to achieve.

For Children's Services, this had a wide portfolio from safeguarding to schools and education, youth services to social services. The borough had received a 'good' Ofsted rating for social services which was a huge step forward but were working very hard towards getting an 'outstanding' rating. There were many complicated cases in children's services so the borough was putting in more resources for the cases and to further improve the care provided. A large recruitment campaign was currently underway to get more permanent staff. Many boroughs including RBWM had faced challenges using agency staff.

For schools, Councillor Carroll informed the Conference that he was the Chairman of the School Improvement Forum. His role included focussing on disadvantaged children. One of the roles of this Forum was to see how the academic achievement could be raised for those vulnerable children.

For youth services, RBWM was looking to transform what the Children's Support Officers report said, looking more into best practice.

Councillor Gerry Clark, Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure, informed the Conference that his role included keeping people moving including road safety. The borough

developed infrastructure to move with the times for rail, road and air. The borough worked with a range of organisations.

Councillor David Cannon, Lead Member for Public Protection and Parking, informed the Conference that his role included flooding, emergency planning, police, CCTV, licensing, registration services, trading standards, environmental health and being Chairman of the Windsor Planning Committee. With respect to flooding, especially in Wraysbury, this was a good time to test the systems in place and see how well they work. Councillor Cannon reported that the River Thames Scheme was still in planning phase, but the borough had committed to supporting the scheme. This would probably be in action in a few years and the protection from it would be amazing. Councillor Cannon informed the Conference that they had removed the resident advantage card saving for parking but the borough were working to bring something more tested and efficient in September 2020 to benefit residents.

Councillor David Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Maidenhead stated in his introduction that he was the Chairman of DALC some years back. The areas that he dealt with included the Borough Local Plan, neighbourhood plans, design guides and focussing on Maidenhead and Ascot. Councillor Coppinger touched on the monthly development management planning meetings and that officers made decisions by following rules. Councillor Coppinger sat on the Building Controls Board along with Wokingham and West Berkshire, sat on the Waste Minerals Board with Reading, Bracknell and Wokingham. Councillor Coppinger was also the Lead Member for Maidenhead, looking at the bigger picture and the Chairman for the Optalis Holdings Board which was providing adult social care.

Apologies had been received from Councillor David Hilton, Lead Member for Finance and Ascot, Councillor Ross McWilliams, Lead Member for Housing, Communications and Youth Engagement and Councillor Donna Stimson, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change, Sustainability, Parks and Countryside.

BUDGETS ASSUMPTIONS PRESENTATION (10 MINS)

Peter Robinson, CIPFA, gave a presentation to the Conference. Some of the points that were highlighted included:

- The borough had high levels of borrowing;
- The borough had a substantial pension deficit;
- The borough still had the lowest council tax in the country even with the 4% increase;
- As RBWM was an affluent borough, it would lose a big proportion to other boroughs that were not as affluent because of the set tariff. There would be an additional levy if the borough made over 50% of the amount.
- The borough needed to identify further savings and efficiencies. RBWM were similar to other councils in the country but the additional pressure that RBWM had was low reserves.
- A Budget strategy was in place and the borough were working through a transformation strategy.
- There were funds built in the reserves for the unexpected, such as Coronavirus. The council was looking into what services had to be kept running in case the Council had to close down.
- Sunningdale Parish Council asked about the transformation strategy and what the time frame was for it. Peter Robinson advised the Conference that the budget was now in place and conversations had started in order to have something within the next six months.

BERKSHIRE YOUTH SERVICE - PROJECTS OVERVIEW (15 MINS)

David Seward, Berkshire Youth, gave a presentation informing the Conference what Berkshire Youth was and how long it had been serving. David Seward explained what the focusses of the organisation were and what the budgetary constraints were for the organisation. David Seward went through the project summaries such as Fit 4 Youth, Splat, Berkshire Youth's Leadership Academy, Fusion, Berkshire Youth's Young First Aiders, Bounce Back, Duke of Edinburgh Award and Berkshire Youth Community Work, Youth Development Training and A Youth Fund For Berkshire. The presentation was concluded by suggesting ways that everyone could help and contact details.

The Chairman thanked David Seward and suggested that Parish Councils contacted Berkshire Youth directly for a visit from David Seward and his team.

UPDATE ON THE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN (10 MINS)

James Carpenter, Interim Head of Planning, updated the Conference on the Borough Local Plan. The consultation had received 700 responses and active dialogue with the inspectors was continuing through the programme officer. All representations had been supplied to the Inspector. All site specific issues had been flagged up, general observations made had been raised too. The borough were waiting to hear from the Inspector as to dates to re-open the examination these would be published once agreed, this would define the timescale of the way forward.

James Carpenter informed the Conference that the new Head of Planning – Adrien Waite would join the borough at the end of March 2020 and James Carpenter will be remaining in alternative role beyond April 2020. Ashley Smith, Deputy Head of Planning, had left the borough to take up a role at Runnymede.

James Carpenter informed the Conference that Sian Saadeh had accepted a role stepping up on an interim basis to fill in for Ashley's former role. This would be on her return from Maternity leave in April. James was pleased to announce that two more members of the Planning team had successfully secured their Fully Chartered status through professional assessment.

In the transitional period the key contacts for Parish Councils would remain the respective planning case officers for planning applications. Beyond this Tony Franklin for Maidenhead issues and Victoria Gibson for Windsor issues are the Team Leaders. Helen Murch is leading on the Local Plan and Victoria Goldberg is the manager responsible for Conservation and Enforcement.

WINDSOR, ASCOT AND MAIDENHEAD COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (10 MINS)

Councillor Simon Bond, Steering Group Member, gave a presentation on the Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead Community Land Trust (WAM CLT). Councillor Bond informed the Conference on what the WAM CLT was and the aims of it, the alternatives for affordable housing, what the steering group was and what they did. Councillor Bond explained what community land trusts were all about.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Bond for the presentation and asked Parish Councils to contact Councillor Bond if they had any questions on cllr.bond@rbwm.gov.uk

PARISH CONFERENCE - GOING FORWARD (30 MINS)

Parish Councillor Anne-Catherine Buxton, Chairman, RBWM District Association of Parish Councils (DALC) and Co-Chairman of the Parish Conference gave a short presentation to the Conference. The presentation highlighted the key objectives of moving from the Parish Conference to the new Parish Summit. It was suggested that the Summit would take place

annually at a large location with breakout sessions and workshops, with more concentration on wider topics.

The Conference were all in favour of this new way of working, going forward.

The first Summit would be held in October 2020.

DATE OF NEXT CONFERENCE

The first Summit would be planned for October 2020.

The meeting, which began at 7.00 pm, finished at 9.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....