

COUNCIL MEETING

24 FEBRUARY 2014

PRESENT:

D. J. Leytham (Chairman)

Bacon, B. F.	Heath, H. R.	Smedley, D.
Bacon, Mrs N.	Humphreys, K. P.	Spruce, C. J.
Barnett, Mrs S. A.	Isaacs, D.	Stanhope MBE, Mrs M.
Bland, Mrs M. P.	Marshall, T.	Strachan, R. W.
Constable, Mrs B. L.	Mosson, R. C.	Taylor, S. D.
Constable, D. H. J.	Mynott, G.	Thomas, T.J.
Cox, R. E.	Norman, S.G.	Tranter, Mrs H.
Derrick, B. W.	Pearce, A. G.	Walker MBE, J.T.
Eadie, I. M.	Powell, J. J. R.	Warfield, M. A.
Evans, Mrs. C. D.	Pritchard, I. M. P.	Wilcox, M. J.
Fisher, Mrs H. E.	Pullen, D. R.	Wilks, J. N.
Flowith, Mrs L. E.	Richards, Mrs. V.	Willis-Croft, K. A.
Greatorex, C.	Roberts, N. J.	Woodward, Mrs S. E.
Hancocks, Mrs R.	Salter, D. F.	Yeates, B. W.

(**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors Mrs Allsopp, Mrs Arnold, Awty, Drinkwater, Mrs Eagland, Hogan, Ms Perkins, A. F. Smith, D.S. Smith (Vice Chairman), Tittley, and White)

PRAYERS:

Prayers were said by the Reverend P.R. Clark.

238 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

The following declarations of interest were made: -

Councillor Walker – Personal Interest in the Fusion Credit Union

Councillor Mrs Woodward – Personal Interest in the Fusion Credit Union.

239 MINUTES – 10 DECEMBER 2013:

It was proposed, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 10 December 2013 (Volume 41 Part 4 Minutes Book) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

240 MINUTES – 28 JANUARY 2014:

It was proposed, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 28 January 2014 (Volume 41 Part 4 Minutes Book) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

241 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(a) Councillor Mrs M. P. Bland

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mrs Bland to the Council following the recent by-election in Chadsmead. Councillor Wilcox also welcomed Councillor Mrs Bland and said his Group looked forward to working with her in the future.

(b) Donations in Lieu of Christmas Cards

The Chairman thanked everyone who had donated to the Chairman's charity instead of sending Christmas cards and advised that a total of £190 had been raised.

(c) Chairman's Gala Dinner

The Chairman thanked all those supporting the forthcoming Gala Dinner on Friday 7 March and advised that £750 had been raised to date.

242 TO RECEIVE THE RETURNING OFFICER'S CERTIFICATE OF ELECTION OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR AND REPORT ON DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE FOR WARD NO 16 (CHADSMEAD):

It was reported that Marion Patricia Bland had been elected as a District Councillor for the Chadsmead Ward at an Election on 30 January 2014 and that her Declaration of Acceptance of Office had been completed. Councillor Norman welcomed Councillor Mrs Bland and said he looked forward to her input in the future.

RESOLVED: That the Returning Officer's Certificate of Election for Councillor Mrs Bland for the Chadsmead Ward be received.

243 REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON CABINET DECISIONS FROM THE MEETINGS HELD 14 JANUARY AND 4 FEBRUARY 2014 AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS:

6 - ICT - Looking To The Future

Councillor Norman commended the ICT report and asked for reassurance that future changes in ICT would be budgeted for. Councillor Wilcox confirmed that provision would need to be made in all areas and noted the rapid pace of change in ICT.

244 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Cox submitted his report on the matters considered by the Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 7 January 2014.

2 – Consideration of Changes to the Council's Constitution With Regard to Officer Delegated Powers

Councillor Mynott asked for confirmation that members of the public objecting to Planning Applications were being advised, in writing, that the application could be called-in by their local Ward Member as had been previously agreed. Councillor Pritchard said he could not recall the agreement but would look into the matter and would get back to Councillor Mynott.

3 – Tamworth and Lichfield Business and Economic Partnership (BEP) and Shared Service in Economic Development – Further Progress Update

Councillor Mrs Evans said that details had been requested about the nature of the employment referred to in the report and these were still awaited. In particular, details regarding the number of people in full time and part time work; those with casual, fixed, permanent, temporary or zero hour contracts; and wage levels (i.e. a break down of those on minimum wage and above).

Councillor Cox undertook to make enquiries but noted that it could be difficult to extrapolate the figures and provide a break down. Councillor Mynott requested that any information provided be shared with all Members.

245 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OPERATIONAL SERVICES, LEISURE, COMMUNICATIONS AND TOURISM (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Mrs Tranter submitted her report on the matters considered by the Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 9 January 2014.

Councillor Derrick noted that his apology for absence had been listed but he was not a member of the Committee and had previously requested that his name be removed from the membership list.

1 – The Control of Dogs in Parks

Councillor Norman referred to an incident involving a dog in Beacon Park and called for incidents involving out of control dogs to be treated more seriously, and for the way staff dealt with such incidents to be looked at.

2 – Mid Year Performance Report – One Year Action Plan

Councillor Mynott raised concern about reports that he considered contained insufficient detail to enable effective scrutiny. He also questioned whether the rise in anti-social behaviour in Fazeley and Burntwood was related to the cessation of schemes such as Aspire and Positive Futures.

Councillor Mrs Tranter replied that she was not aware of any link and Councillor Pullen said that there were very few incidents of anti-social behaviour in Fazeley and urged caution when drawing conclusions from small data sets. Councillor Greatorex added that once a full break down of the anti-social behaviour figures was released Members would be able to draw their own conclusions.

5 – Management Procedures for the Council's Tree Stock

With reference to paragraph 5.3 of the Chairman's report, Councillor Mrs Evans requested clarification of how the procedures would work in relation to trees on sites owned by Bromford Living. She also expressed the hope that landownership problems between Bromford Living and the Council could be resolved.

Councillor Mrs Tranter advised Bromford Living was responsible for trees on their land and Councillor Pritchard confirmed that trees subject to Preservation Orders on housing association land would be dealt with in the same way as those on land owned by an individual i.e. the landowner would be contacted in the first instance but would be charged as necessary if work needed to be undertaken on their behalf by the Council.

The wording of the Chairman's report in relation to the Council's powers to carry out works on sites owned by Bromford Living was questioned and it was advised that any change to the record of the meeting would need to be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6 – Service Review Meetings - Feedback

Councillor Mrs Woodward highlighted the importance of engaging with disability groups and said she was pleased that the contract with Cherry Orchard Garden Services had been reinstated after the unfortunate initial decision to end it. She hoped that future contracts would be considered in terms of value and not on financial grounds alone.

246 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Marshall submitted his report on the matters considered by the Community, Housing and Environmental Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 22 January 2014.

1 – Top Ten Issues and Performance Reporting

Councillor Mynott noted that reference was made in the report to progress made in connection with anti-social behaviour, and questioned if the increase in incidents could be termed progress.

With regard to work clubs, Councillor Mynott requested data on the type of employment that people were entering via the Clubs and said it would be useful to know how many constituents went into full time work with a living wage. He added that the number of people helped into work looked like a decrease and questioned if this was to do with cuts to Community Development.

Councillor Greatorex responded that the report referred to positive progress that had been made in a number of areas including service level agreements, supporting families and the homelessness strategy. The report had shown progress in anti-social behaviour with only a small number of incidents overall. He advised that the work clubs had proved to be popular and steps were being taken to start another club. He advised that data on the nature of employment being found was difficult to collect, not least because there was little contact with people once they had successfully found employment.

Councillor Marshall said that the level of pay was possibly not the most salient issue since the most important thing was for people to get back into work thereby getting a rung on the ladder and a chance to progress.

Councillor Isaacs questioned why there was no auditing of the clubs outcomes since the Council needed to know if resources were being used effectively. In response Councillor Greatorex referred to the difficulty in tracking and providing the kind of data that was being requested.

2 – Equality Statement 2014

Councillor Norman noted that Councillor Greatorex had been appointed as the Member Champion for Equality and asked if details could be provided at some stage of the role and experience of the post holder. Councillor Greatorex made reference to his experience including that gained as an Employment Tribunal Member and confirmed that he would respond to Councillor Norman in writing.

3 – Homelessness Strategy 2013 - 2018

Councillor Mrs Woodward referred to changes in respect of Supporting People funding which could result in the decommissioning of some local services, and drew attention to the review that was currently underway.

She asked the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if he had been able to identify services that may be vulnerable to cuts in the District. Councillor Marshall advised that he would look into this and would contact Mrs Woodward via email.

247 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Strachan submitted his report on the matters considered by the Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 29 January 2014.

1 – The Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2014 -17

Councillor Norman commended Councillor Strachan on his first meeting in the role of Chairman and the way that he had allowed Members to take part in the scrutiny process.

3 – ICT Looking to the Future

Councillor Norman said it would be useful to have a sinking fund for ICT, and suggested it was something that could be considered in the future.

248 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

(a) Planning Committee – 9 December 2013

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9 December 2013 (Minutes Nod 162 – 169) be approved and adopted.

(b) Audit Committee – 17 December 2013

It was proposed by Councillor Mosson, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 17 December 2013 (Minutes Nod 187 – 188) be approved and adopted.

(c) Planning Committee – 6 January 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 6 January 2014 (Minutes Nod 189 – 195) be approved and adopted.

(d) Audit Committee – 21 January 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Mosson duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 21 January 2014 (Minutes Nod 196 – 204) be approved and adopted.

(e) Planning Committee – 27 January 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 27 January 2014 (Minutes Nod 205 – 209) be approved and adopted.

(f) Employment Committee – 13 February 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Powell and duly seconded "That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Employment Committee held on 13 February 2014 (Minutes Nod 213 – 219) be approved and adopted."

Arising on the Minutes:

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Constable stated that he had attended the meeting but was not included on the list of those present.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Employment Committee held on 13 February 2014 (Minutes Nod 213 – 219) be approved and adopted subject to the addition of Councillor Constable to the list of those present.

(g) Planning Committee – 17 February 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 17 February 2014 (Minutes Nod 220 – 225) be approved and adopted.

(h) Regulatory and Licensing Committee – 18 February 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Yeates, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee held on 18 February 2014 (Minutes Nod 226 – 237) be approved and adopted.

249 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION:

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce and seconded by Councillor Wilcox "that Part 4 of the Council's Rules of Procedure (Standing Orders) be amended as follows:

- Page 16 be amended to include:-

15.4.5 (i) Immediately after any vote is taken at a budget decision meeting of Full Council there must be recorded in the minutes of the proceedings of that meeting the names of the persons who cast a vote for the decision or against the decision or who abstained from voting.

(ii) In paragraph 15.4.5(i) – (a) "budget decision" means a meeting of Full Council at which it –

(i) makes a calculation (whether originally or by way of substitute) in accordance with any of sections 31A, 31B, 34 to 36A, 42A, 42B, 45 to 49, 52ZF, 52ZJ of the Local Government Finance Act 1992(c); or

(ii) issues a precept under Chapter 4 of Part 1 of that Act, and includes a meeting where making the calculation or issuing the precept as the case may be was included as an item of business on the agenda for that meeting;

(b) references to a vote are references to a vote on any decision related to the making of the calculation or the issuing of the precept as the case may be.

- Page 35 be amended to include:-

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulation 2014.”

Councillor Norman referred to localism and questioned whether the changes were something that could be decided locally. It was confirmed that the Council was required to implement the changes.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the changes to the Constitution as submitted in connection with changes to the Council's Rules of Procedure (Standing Orders) be approved.

250 PROPOSALS FROM THE CABINET

(a) **Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2014–17, and Treasury Council Tax Resolution 2014/15**

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce “that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2014-17 and the Council Tax Resolution 2014/15 as submitted be approved.”

Councillor Spruce advised that the proposed Council Tax increase of 1.99% for 2014/15 would represent an increase of £2.96 per annum for a standard band D property. He drew Members attention to the detailed report and in particular the total funding gap of £2,843,450 over the period 2014/15 to 2016/17 and advised that whilst the new homes bonus would contribute towards reducing the gap in the longer term this had not come on stream and without a Council Tax increase the Council would inevitably be looking to cut more services. He said the proposal was the right decision for the residents of the District and of the eight Borough Councils in Staffordshire, Lichfield would still be the fourth cheapest.

In seconding the proposal Councillor Wilcox emphasised that the Council could not spend more money than it received and using reserves was not a solution. He advised that Fit for the Future Phase 2 would involve the public, enabling people to identifying the services that were most important to them, and that the Council would do everything it could to improve income streams. Councillor Wilcox noted that the proposal would reduce the funding gap and it would be irresponsible not to support it.

Councillor Norman referred to the report submitted to Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee on 29 January 2014 which assumed a freeze in Council Tax and proposed, as an amendment to the motion, that this option should be endorsed by Council.

Councillor Norman noted that the County Council, Police and Fire Service had opted for a freeze and asked how the District could put up Council Tax when people were struggling to pay bills. He referred to the decision in 2009/10 to reduce Council Tax which he said had resulted in lost revenue and had been followed by subsequent year on year increases and now the Council was again looking to increase by the maximum allowed. Councillor Norman questioned why no support was forthcoming from local Members of Parliament and said it was a strange decision to put up tax in the year before an election and if the opposition wanted to use reserves, why not use them now.

Councillor Eadie said it seemed like a case of role reversal with the opposition group arguing for

a freeze. He said the Conservative Group was trying to deal with the priorities of the Coalition Government that was trying to resolve the financial disaster it had inherited. As a consequence the Council now needed to raise more and spend less. He said to call for a freeze was irresponsible since it would require deeper cuts and referred to the consultation exercise that would be undertaken to help determine the services people wanted the Council to continue. He said the Labour Group claimed they did not want to increase income through Council Tax but had not proposed what services they would like to stop and concluded by emphasising the need to be financially responsible.

Councillor Constable stated that there was no alternative to the proposed increase given the financial situation. He said that every year the opposition criticised the proposals submitted and questioned why they did not come forward with a budget.

Councillor Wilcox said it was irresponsible to use reserves, and asked what would happen when the reserves were gone. He said it was essential to protect the organisation's finances and ensure the Council is able to continue.

Councillor Mynott seconded the amendment proposed by Councillor Norman and expressed concern at the lack of control due to Government rules under the pretext of localism. He said that a Labour administration may have to make a case for an increase to protect services and vulnerable people however it was difficult for the Minority Group to approve an increase when £800,000 was being spent on the Garrick and large sums were or had been spent on Friarsgate, Darnford Park and the Heritage Parks project. He said under the current administration services to the poorest suffered but the Garrick and other projects had been lavishly funded. Councillor Mynott stated that if investments were made in outreach work and supporting local low wage workers instead he would be able to offer support. He added that it would be good to see the Majority Group put some pressure on their Government.

In response Councillor Greatorex said the Garrick expenditure figures that had been quoted were inaccurate, and that in reality a net cost of £625,000 had been reduced down to £475,000 in 2015/16. He said no indications had been given as to what Labour would have done to address the financial situation. Councillor Mrs Woodward interjected that suggestions had been submitted by the Labour Group and Councillor Greatorex responded that these had been small scale proposals.

He continued that there was a legal requirement to maintain reserves and advised that in relation to budget setting percentages were damaging and misleading since the District Council's tax rate was below the average for both Staffordshire and the United Kingdom and therefore a 1.99% increase would be less than in a neighbouring authority with a higher Council Tax rate. The low starting point also meant that it was impossible for the Council to catch up with other Authorities. He concluded that this was not an election budget but a budget for the District Council.

Councillor Cox reminded Members that the District was not unique in increasing Council Tax and referred to Brighton where a referendum was being held to increase tax above 3.00 %. He argued that the proposal for the District was a prudent measure and it was nonsense to suggest that reserves should be used instead.

Councillor Pritchard recalled that a Member of the opposition had lamented the fact that the Authority had made good, hard working staff redundant and expressed the hope that this could be avoided in the second phase of Fit for the Future. Councillor Pritchard said he also hoped that cuts could be kept to a minimum but steps needed to be taken to increase income or cuts would inevitably be more severe.

Councillor Strachan said that whilst it was not welcome to ask for an increase in tax, not doing so would mean the loss of loved and well used services and loyal, hardworking staff. He said cuts to grants could not currently be offset by the new homes bonus and therefore the Council was required to consider ways to increase income and reduce expenditure, and noted that considerable cuts in staff had already been made. He said the proposal was a small contribution

towards offsetting the difficult financial position, and the aim of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was to ensure the continued provision of services.

Councillor Mrs Woodward said that attempts were being made to justify the unjustifiable and that the 2010/2011 Conservative Manifesto said the Council intended to freeze Council Tax and not increase above inflation for the rest of the term. She said that a 1.99% increase broke another manifesto commitment. Councillor Mrs Woodward said that Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee had considered a report assuming that Council Tax would be frozen and it was now being proposed that it would be £300,000 higher, she questioned what had changed so radically. She also said that more was spent on the Garrick than would be raised by the increase and that the meeting of the Garrick Panel which had not taken place in January as scheduled was a missed opportunity. Councillor Mrs Woodward concluded that the inroads made into the deficit had resulted in the loss of staff and services and the tax increase was a double whammy.

Councillor Norman referred to the Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee report and stated that reserves were still being used, just not quite as much as originally proposed. He also asked what had changed in the past few weeks that had resulted in the decision to put up Council Tax. He said it was interesting that there was so little faith in the new homes bonus, advised that his party had been pushing for public consultation; and asked if there would be an apology for the 2009/10 budget which had resulted in £2 million in lost income over the subsequent financial years. Councillor Norman said that the plan considered by the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee offered a balanced budget without an increase in Council Tax.

Councillor Spruce said that Councillor Mrs Woodward had criticised the Council Tax freeze in year one and said that the increases were below the rate of inflation. Councillor Spruce stated that some of the figures that had been quoted by the opposition for the Garrick were incorrect and added that the current financial situation was a direct result of the enormous deficit in the public finances. He advised that the Council would have the same deficit even if it used up all its reserves and a decision not to increase tax, because of the compound effect, would seriously impact on future finances. With regard to the new Homes Bonus and Retained Business Rates he argued that his was a question of timing and that the benefits would feed through.

A named vote was then taken on the amendment proposed by Councillor Norman and seconded by Councillor Mynott "that the budget as submitted to Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 January 2014 be approved." The vote was recorded as follows:

**FOR
(10)**

Bland, Mrs M. P.
Evans, Mrs C. D.
Heath, H. R.
Isaacs, D.
Mynott, G.
Norman, S. C.
Taylor, S. D.
Walker, J. T.
Willis-Croft, K. A.
Woodward, Mrs S. E.

**AGAINST
(32)**

Bacon, B. F.
Bacon, Mrs N.
Barnett, Mrs S. A.
Constable, Mrs B. L.
Constable, D. H. J.
Cox, R. E.
Derrick, B. W.
Eadie, I. M.
Fisher, Mrs H. E.
Flowith, Mrs L.. E.
Greatorex, C.
Hancocks, Mrs R.
Humphreys, K. P.
Marshall, T.
Mosson, R. C.
Pearce, A. G.
Powell, J. J. R.
Pritchard, I. M. P.
Pullen, D. R.
Richards, Mrs V.

**ABSTAIN
(1)**

Leytham, D. J.

Roberts, N. J.
Salter, D. F.
Smedley, D.
Spruce, C. J.
Stanhope, Mrs M.
Strachan, R .W.
Thomas, T. J.
Tranter, Mrs H.
Warfield, M. A.
Wilcox, M. J.
Wilks, J. N.
Yeates, B. W.

The Amendment was declared **LOST**.

A named vote was then taken on the Motion proposed by Councillor Spruce and seconded by Councillor Wilcox "that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2014-17 and the Council Tax Resolution 2014/15 as submitted be approved" and was recorded as follows:-

**FOR
(33)**

Bacon, B. F.
Bacon, Mrs N.
Barnett, Mrs S. A.
Bland, Mrs M. P.
Constable, Mrs B. L.
Constable, D. H. J.
Cox, R. E.
Derrick, B. W.
Eadie, I. M.
Fisher, Mrs H. E.
Flowith, Mrs L.. E.
Greatorex, C.
Hancocks, Mrs R.
Humphreys, K. P.
Marshall, T.
Mosson, R. C.
Pearce, A. G.
Powell, J. J. R.
Pritchard, I. M. P.
Pullen, D. R.
Richards, Mrs V.
Roberts, N. J.
Salter, D. F.
Smedley, D.
Spruce, C. J.
Stanhope, Mrs M.
Strachan, R .W.
Thomas, T. J.
Tranter, Mrs H.
Warfield, M. A.
Wilcox, M. J.
Wilks, J. N.
Yeates, B. W.

**AGAINST
(9)**

Evans, Mrs C. D.
Heath, H. R.
Isaacs, D.
Mynott, G.
Norman, S. C.
Taylor, S. D.
Walker, J. T.
Willis-Croft, K. A.
Woodward, Mrs S. E.

**ABSTAIN
(1)**

Leytham, D. J.

The motion was declared **CARRIED**.

It was therefore:

RESOLVED: That the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2014-17 and the Council Tax Resolution 2014/15 as submitted be approved.

(b) Review of the Plan for Lichfield District: Annual Action Plan 2014/15

It was proposed by Councillor Greatorex and seconded by Councillor Eadie "that the 2014/15 Action Plan as submitted be approved."

Councillor Mynott spoke about the Local Council Tax Support scheme and voiced concerns about the impact on vulnerable people, he said it was for local authorities to decide how they should spend and some Councils had ensured that the most vulnerable people would not lose out. Councillor Greatorex noted that there was currently an underspend on the Local Council Tax support budget, but it had to be managed in a way that ensured that the Council did not run out of funds before the end of the year.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the Annual Action Plan for 2014/15 be approved .

251 BOUNDARY REVIEW

Consideration was given to Ward boundary proposals from the Labour and Conservative Groups as considered by Regulatory and Licensing Committee on 18 February 2014 with a view to determining the Council's formal submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

During the debate Councillor Norman supported the view that both the Labour Group and the Conservative Group proposals should be submitted. Mrs Woodward said she thought it had been agreed that both proposals should go forward and questioned if the final Conservative proposal had been subject to scrutiny by the Boundary Commission Working Group.

Councillor Mynott supported the view that both proposals should be submitted and said that the Working Group had spent two to three months working on these. Councillor Derrick noted that there had been 75% agreement on the Boundary Commission Working Group and advised that alternative proposals could be submitted to the Commission independently.

Councillor Constable said that Burntwood Members had been underrepresented on the Working Group and amendments to the Conservative proposal were considered and agreed by the Regulatory and Licensing Committee. Councillor Humphreys said he understood that Regulatory and Licensing Committee intended that one or other of the proposals should be submitted.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher and seconded by Councillor Mosson that 'the proposal from the Conservative Group as considered and agreed by the Regulatory and Licensing Committee on 18 February 2014 be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as the Council's formal submission.'

Following a vote it was

RESOLVED: That the proposal from the Conservative Group as considered and agreed by the Regulatory and Licensing Committee on 18 February 2014 be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England as the Council's formal submission.

252 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES:

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox and seconded "that the revised structure of Overview and

Scrutiny Committees as circulated be approved subject to the amendment to the name of the former Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny Committee) to read Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny Committee).”

RESOLVED: That the revised structure of Overview and Scrutiny Committees as circulated be approved subject to the amendment to the name of the former Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny Committee) to read Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

253 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES:

Changes to Committees following the election of Councillor Mrs Bland were proposed by Councillor Wilcox and seconded by Councillor Pritchard.

RESOLVED: That the proposed changes to Committees following the election of Councillor Mrs Bland be agreed.

254 FILMING POLICY

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Pritchard and

RESOLVED: That the Filming Policy as circulated be agreed.

255 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS:

Consideration was given to the proposed Calendar of Meetings as circulated.

A number of amendments were suggested and Councillor Isaacs questioned whether invites could be sent out using Microsoft Outlook. Councillor Mrs Richards noted that in instances when Chairmen were not available it was preferable for Vice-Chairmen to take the role rather than for the meeting to be rescheduled.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the Calendar of Meetings as circulated be approved subject to the amendments agreed at the meeting.

256 QUESTIONS:

Question 1

Question from Councillor Mrs Woodward to the Leader of the Council

“At the Council meetings of 9 July 2013 and 8 October 2013, I asked the Leader and then Deputy Leader of Council about the delay in the development of the Burntwood Health Centre, urging that the Council take a more active role in progressing this and communicate more effectively with stakeholders. Can the Leader tell me what action has been taken by the Council on the development of this health centre and the proposed new facilities at Greenwood House since a meeting held on 7 November 2013 with a representative of NHS England and how these have been communicated to stakeholders.?”

Response from the Leader of the Council:

“Members, including Cllr Mrs Woodward, met with a representative of NHS England on 7 November 2013 to discuss the proposed Burntwood Health Centre. They were advised that

the decision on the future of the project had been passed from managers based in the region to offices in London. It was suggested that a decision was unlikely before April.

Since then, the council has written by email, in January and in February, to NHS England asking for updates on progress and reminding NHS England that the planning permission and lease on the existing temporary health and wellbeing centre adjacent to Burntwood Leisure Centre both expire later this year.

The Council has been advised verbally that, as yet, no decision has been made but the council has been asked to extend the lease of the existing health and wellbeing centre for a further three years. This request will be considered by Cabinet in due course.

Greenwood House is a matter for three parties, NHS England, SCC and the GP practices concerned.

On December 13th the CEO at SCC had given a commitment to appoint a developer and then construct. The GP's have agreed their accommodation schedules. The Area Team from NHS England will not reimburse the GP legal fees or stamp duty land tax and have asked SCC to pay or make a contribution towards the GP costs.

Sultan Mahmood at NHS England has sent a letter of commitment to SCC regarding the development subject to the Area Team not funding the legal and stamp duty land tax fees.

SCC will appoint the District Valuer as soon as the accommodation has been revised and provision for the new pharmacy removed as there is now adjacent provision via a 100 hour pharmacy.

Of course when we learn of progress and developments with regards to these two projects we will advise Members and stakeholders.

But these projects remain the responsibility of NHS England to manage, deliver and promote and the district council's ability to influence progress is limited."

Councillor Mrs Woodward asked the following supplementary question:

'Can we find out the criteria being used to make a decision about the New Health Centre and actively lobby the NHS and all stakeholders'

Councillor Wilcox responded:

'We will continue to lobby and liaise with the County Council.'

Question 2

Question from Councillor Mynott to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Democratic and Legal Services

"Due to rushed and poorly drafted legislation people in social housing who have lived in the same property since 1996 should not have been asked to pay the bedroom tax. Could you tell me how many people in Lichfield District have incorrectly had their housing benefit cut as a result of the wrongful levying of the bedroom tax?"

Response from Councillor Spruce:

"The number of people affected by the HB & CTB (Consequential Provisions) Regulations are 18. The legislation is changing with effect from the 3rd March 2014 and the 18 affected cases will no longer be exempt."

Councillor Mynott asked the following supplementary question:

'What is the cost to the Council of repaying the 18 people affected, including additional costs?'

Councillor Spruce responded:

'I will find out if the information can be obtained'

Question 3

Question from Councillor Mynott to the Portfolio Holder for Community, Housing and Environmental Health:

"Could you tell me how many social housing tenants are in arrears with their rent at this time and what the figures were for this time last year?"

Response from Councillor Greatorex:

"LDC doesn't collect this information so we have approached Bromford, Waterloo and Midland Heart Housing in order to give a response. Waterloo Housing was unable to provide a response in the time available.

Midland Heart has advised that in February 2013, 203 of their tenants in Lichfield District were in arrears. A year on, this now stands at 225 of their tenants."

Bromford Living are the largest provider in the district and have given figures. As of 21st February 2014, 674 Bromford tenants living in Lichfield District are in arrears. This is a reduction of 112 compared with the same time in 2013.

A Housing Manager has reported that this reduction of numbers in arrears is partly due to their Money Adviser, Home Income Team and Housing Managers having been proactive in helping customers but also due to the success in enabling some under-occupying customers to move to smaller accommodation."

Councillor Mynott asked the following supplementary question:

'How many people were evicted?'

Councillor Greatorex responded:

'We have been working closely with Bromford Living and as a result there are 112 fewer people in arrears and no evictions'.

257 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS:

RESOLVED: That as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3, 4 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

IN PRIVATE

258 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL:

Councillor Wilcox submitted his confidential report as Leader on the decision made at the Cabinet Meeting held on 14 January 2014.

1 – Write off of Non Domestic Rates

Councillor Willis-Croft expressed concern about the write off and said steps must be taken to ensure it did not happen again. Councillor Wilcox responded that regrettably the company concerned had been declared bankrupt and confirmed that the Authority would always strive to collect what was rightfully due.

259 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

Councillor Cox submitted his confidential report on the matters considered by the Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 2 December 2013.

1 - Friarsgate - Update

Councillor Cox agreed to supply Councillor Mynott with details on how much money the District Council had invested in the Friarsgate scheme and the cost to the Council if it did not proceed.

260 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

Councillor Marshall submitted his confidential report on the matters considered by Community, Housing and Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 22 January 2014.

Councillor Humphreys advised that he had attended the meeting but was not recorded on the list of those present.

1 - Proposals for Intermediate Care

Councillors Mrs Constable expressed concern that care workers were being timed when looking after people in their homes and said they must be given sufficient time to care for people properly. She stressed there should be regular monitoring of care provision. Councillor Mrs Woodward agreed and said there were instances where care workers did not even have the fifteen minutes currently allocated since the time slots did not always allow for travel. Councillor Marshall confirmed that he would try to ensure that the care provided was monitored.

(The Meeting closed at 8.35 pm)

CHAIRMAN