

COUNCIL MEETING

17 FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT:

D. S. Smith (Chairman)
K. P. Humphreys (Vice-Chairman)

Allsopp, Mrs J. A.	Fisher, Mrs H. E.	Smedley, D.
Arnold, Mrs S. P.	Flowith, Mrs L. E.	Smith, A. F.
Awty, R. J.	Greatorex, C.	Spruce, C.J.
Bacon, B. F.	Hancocks, Mrs R.	Stanhope MBE, Mrs M.
Bacon, Mrs N.	Heath, H. R.	Strachan, R. W.
Barnett, Mrs S. A.	Hogan, P.	Taylor, S. D.
Boyle, Mrs M. G.	Isaacs, D.	Tranter, Mrs H.
Constable, Mrs B. L.	Leytham, D. J.	Walker MBE, J.T.
Constable, D. H. J.	Marshall, T.	Warfield, M. A.
Cox, R. E.	Mynott, G.	White, A. G.
Derrick, B. W.	Norman, S. G.	Wilcox, M. J.
Drinkwater, E. N.	Pearce, A. G.	Willis-Croft, K. A.
Eagland, Mrs J. M.	Pritchard, I. M. P.	
Evans, Mrs C. D.	Roberts, N. J.	

(**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors Mrs Bland, Eadie, Mosson, Powell, Pullen, Mrs Richards, Salter, Tittley, Mrs Woodward and Yeates).

PRAYERS:

Prayers were said by the Very Reverend Archimandrite S. Piers who made particular reference to Mrs J. M. Sutton (Administrative Assistant) who had recently died.

197 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

The following declarations of interest were made:-

- 1) Councillor Mrs Boyle – Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 16 (Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy and Local Development Scheme) in respect of any items concerning South Lichfield.
- 2) Councillor Mrs Flowith – Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 16 (Lichfield District Local Plan Strategy and Local Development Scheme) as she was a partner of a company involved as agent for some sites affected.
- 3) Councillor White – Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 7 (Report of the Leader) in respect of Point 12 (Acceptance of Funding to Support Locality Commissioning) and Agenda Item 7 (Report of the Chairman of Community, Housing and Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee with regard to Point 1 (Health Issues) in view of his Staffordshire County Council involvement.

198 MINUTES – 9 DECEMBER 2014:

It was proposed and duly seconded “that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 9 December 2014 (Volume 42 Part 4 Minute Book) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.”

Arising on the Minutes:

Minute No 152 – 30 September 2014

Councillor Mynott said that he considered that the word “also” should be removed in the reference to Minute No 92 and that was agreed.

Minute No 154 – Report of the Leader of the Council on Cabinet Decisions from the meetings held on 7 October and 4 November 2014 and Cabinet Member Decisions

Councillor Mynott asked if the minute was accurate in respect of the Annual Review of Core Prices of Leisure Activities as he had not received the report which should have been issued. Councillor Wilcox confirmed that he would follow that up.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That subject to the word “also” being removed from Minute No 152 (Minutes – 30 September 2014) the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 December 2014 (Volume 42 Part 4 Minute Book) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Minutes – 27 January 2015

It was proposed, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 January 2015 (Volume 42 Part 4 Minute Book) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

199 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(a) Chairman’s Events

The Chairman thanked everyone who had supported the Charity Event (Remi Harris Trio joined by George Huxley) on 16 January 2015 and informed Members that the concert had raised £1,000 for charity.

The Chairman reminded Members that his dinner dance would take place on Friday 6 March 2015 at Drayton Manor and thanked everyone who had bought tickets, sent raffle prizes or made a donation to his charities.

200 REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON CABINET DECISIONS FROM THE MEETINGS HELD ON 13 JANUARY AND 3 FEBRUARY 2015 AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS:

The Leader of the Council submitted his report on Cabinet Decisions from the meetings held on 13 January and 3 February 2015 and on Cabinet Member decisions.

3 – Acceptance of funding from Staffordshire County Council – Supporting Locality Commissioning

Councillor Mynott asked if the Leader was aware that a number of organisations were now excluded from being allowed to bid for funding as they did not meet the agreed criteria and gave details of some of the organisations affected. Councillor Mynott asked if the Leader would review the criteria to allow such organisations to bid.

Councillor Greatorex in response said that the priorities had been agreed by the four funding organisations involved who had agreed them so that funding available was not spread too thinly.

14 – Transfer of High Street Innovation Fund to Burntwood Business Community

Councillor Mrs Fisher congratulated the Burntwood Business Community on taking this forward by holding regular meetings to deal with making progress. Councillor Mrs Fisher informed Members that most Councillors involved were now leaving the Group to allow the traders to run it themselves.

Councillor Drinkwater said that he would not be standing down from the Group as he considered that the traders welcomed the involvement and links with Local Councillors.

Councillor Wilcox hoped that the Business Community would be allowed to take the lead and organise the Fund for their benefit.

201 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY, HOUSING AND HEALTH (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Marshall submitted his report on the items considered by the Community, Housing and Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 14 January 2015.

1 – Health Issues

Councillor Mynott referred to the cost of the recent consultation exercise on the future of Day Case Theatres at Sir Robert Peel Hospital and asked if the information had yet been received.

Councillor Walker referred to the cut backs in Care Services and considered that this was likely to be a retrograde step.

Councillor Norman asked the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee if he was aware of any action being taken by the Member of Parliament for Lichfield to support the development of new Health Centres in Burntwood.

Councillor Mrs Evans informed Members that another GP surgery in Burntwood may close and this reinforced the need for new health facilities to be provided. Councillor Mrs Evans commented that whilst a five year extension to the temporary health and wellbeing centre was welcomed a permanent solution was needed as one of the implications was that GP's were not being attracted to the area.

Councillor Drinkwater said that issues relating to the provision of health facilities in Burntwood had been going on since the St. Matthews Hospital closed despite a number of promises being made at the time.

Councillor Mrs Constable informed Members that some 300 patients a month were applying to register with the Health and Wellbeing Centre and that this was putting the service under strain.

Councillor Isaacs asked what action by, for instance meetings and representations, the District Council was taking to bring forward the establishment of a permanent Health Centre in

Burntwood.

Councillor Marshall confirmed that he had noted all of the issues raised and said that the consultation costs would be provided to Councillor Mynott. Councillor Marshall added that planning permission for the proposed new Health Centre on the Greenwood House Site was due to start if planning permission was granted in June 2015.

8 – Work Programme and Forward Plan

Councillor Mrs Evans informed Members that during a recent Service Plan Review Meeting only Councillors Mrs Bland, Marshall and herself had been present and whilst appreciating that apologies were submitted by some the attendance was poor. Councillor Mrs Evans also added that no recording officer was present and therefore no notes were made which meant that the exercise was likely to be less worthwhile.

Councillor Pritchard agreed with the concern of Councillor Mrs Evans about attendance at meetings generally and this was supported by Councillor Marshall.

202 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LEISURE, PARKS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Mrs Tranter submitted her report on the matters considered by the Leisure, Parks and Waste Management (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 14 January 2015.

1 – Supporting Lichfield Garrick Trust

Councillor Norman reminded Members that the recent Peer Review had said that scrutiny was a weakness at the District Council and felt that this item supported that view as only a verbal report was provided on the socio economic impact assessment being undertaken by the Garrick Trust which could not be properly scrutinised. Councillor Isaacs supported the comments of Councillor Norman and felt that the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee should have insisted that there was more information provided in a written form and added that the Garrick finances needed to be seen having regard to the grant paid by the District Council. Councillor Isaacs referred to the District Council Officer Services that the Garrick Theatre bought in which amounted to some £150,000 and asked what the level of such funding was in the past.

Councillor Mynott said that as Vice Chairman of the Committee he had raised concerns during the pre meeting and felt that the item was not properly scrutinised. Councillor Awty said that he had some difficulties with the presentation made as it appeared that there was a lack of preparation.

Councillor Wilcox reminded Members that the Garrick Theatre was a success story and that it was now standing on its own feet with the Trust being better able to manage the Theatre than the District Council. Councillor Wilcox confirmed that Socio-Economic Impact assessment being undertaken by the Staffordshire University Business School was yet to be received and would be submitted to Scrutiny in due course. Councillor Cox added that the work of the Garrick Theatre in engaging with young people showed that it was an asset to the community and Councillor A. F. Smith reminded Members that an agreement existed for the Garrick Theatre to buy back services from the District Council and therefore there was no hidden grant.

The Chairman of the Council informed Members that the Garrick Theatre was the third largest visitor attraction in the District and put on events on a charitable basis on occasions.

Councillor Mrs Tranter, in response, said that she had asked for the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment to be provided for the meeting but it had not been available but would be considered in due course. Councillor Mrs Tranter added that if any Members had any specific questions then they should email them to her and she would follow them up.

2 – Joint Waste Service Business Plan

Councillor Drinkwater had noted that the Operatives were able to choose their working hours and asked what other alternatives had been put forward for consideration.

Councillor Mynott asked if the issue relating to accidents suffered in the service should be referred to Employment Committee with a view to identifying what help could be given to staff affected in getting alternative work.

Councillor Mrs Tranter said that details of working hours had been provided but she would get back to Councillor Drinkwater on alternatives available.

3 – Fit for the Future Service Review Update: Parks, Grounds Maintenance and Countryside

Councillor Walker referred to the suggested removal of dog waste litter bins and felt that there should be more rather than less. Councillor Walker asked the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee if she was aware of any plans to increase the numbers.

Councillor Mrs Tranter said that there was some comment about decreasing the numbers but would see if there were any plans to increase the provision.

4 – Anti-Social Behaviour at Burntwood Leisure Centre

Councillor Drinkwater asked what research had been undertaken to determine what caused the anti-social behaviour and commented that he felt that it would get worse as the Youth Service Centres closed as without Detached Youth Workers there would be less people to discourage such behaviour.

Councillor Mrs Evans said that whilst questions were raised the final paragraph said that the report was noted and this could mean that no action would be followed up. Councillor Willis-Croft asked if the meeting referred to had taken place and if so what the outcome was.

Councillor White expressed surprise that Councillor Drinkwater was linking the closure of Youth Centres to the potential increase in anti-social behaviour because there was no evidence to support that and Councillor Drinkwater had always supported young people in the past.

Councillor A. F. Smith said that a meeting had not yet taken place although it had been requested and further information was awaited.

6 – Directorate Top 10 – 15/16

Councillor Mrs Tranter said that paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4 had been duplicated.

203 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Cox submitted his report on the matters considered by the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 20 January 2015.

6 – Lichfield District Local Plan: Update

Councillor Cox thanked all Members and Officers involved in the work done on the Local Plan.

204 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 21 January 2015.

3 – The Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue & Capital) 2015 – 18 (MTFS (R & C) 2015-18)

Councillor Norman noted that it had been recorded that Councillor White had entered the meeting during this item and said that he was not aware that the details when Members attended or left the meetings were recorded.

Councillors Strachan and White informed Members that in light of the previous request at Full Council for early departure of Councillors from meetings to be recorded wherever possible and as Councillor White was quite late for the meeting it was better that this was recorded.

5 – Annual Action Plan 2015/16

Councillor White pointed out that under his Declaration of Interest it should refer to the “Better Care Fund” rather than “Better Health Fund”.

205 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

(a) Planning Committee – 12 January 2015

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher and duly seconded “that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 12 January 2015 (Minutes Nod 168 – 176) be approved and adopted.”

Arising on the Minutes

Minute No 173 – Burntwood – 14/00808/FUL – Erection of 4 No. 2 Bedroom Houses and Association Works. Land Adjacent to Ring O Bells, Chorley Road, Burntwood for Central and Country Development Ltd

Councillor Mrs Evans referred to the representations made and said that did it imply that Mr P. Dunkley had spoken on behalf both of the Objector and the Applicant and that therefore this should be corrected.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That subject to the representations referred to in Minute No 173 being corrected to indicate that Mr Dunkley was speaking on behalf of the Objector only the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 12 January 2015 (Minutes Nod 168 – 176) be approved and adopted.

(b) Regulatory and Licensing Committee – 19 January 2015

It was proposed duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee held on 19 January 2015 (Minutes Nod 177 – 178) be approved and adopted.

(c) Audit Committee – 26 January 2015

It was proposed by Councillor Leytham, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Committee held on 26 January 2015 (Minutes Nod 179 – 185) be approved and adopted.

(d) Regulatory and Licensing Committee – 4 February 2015

It was proposed by Councillor Derrick and duly seconded “that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee held on 4 February 2015 (Minutes Nod 188 – 196) be approved and adopted.”

Arising on the Minutes

Minute No 197 – Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Councillor Marshall informed Members that he had, together with the Chief Executive, attended a meeting at Staffordshire Police Headquarters to discuss this matter and felt that a training session needed to be arranged for the new Council. Councillor Mrs England informed Members that the subject had a very high priority at Staffordshire County Council and said that arrangements had recently been made to ensure that various agencies linked together to identify any potential problems.

Councillor Drinkwater said that many young people affected were unlikely to speak to their parents or teachers but would speak to Youth Workers who would be less available following the closure of Youth Centres. Councillor White commented that there was no evidence to link the closure of Youth Centres to child sexual exploitation.

Councillor Isaacs said that as this was a very important issue consideration should be given to Members of the District Council undertaking relevant Police or Data and Barring Services (DBS) checks in view of their involvement in the community and Councillor Wilcox confirmed that this would be looked into.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee held on 4 February 2015 (Minutes Nod 188 – 196) be approved and adopted.

206 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES:

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

RESOLVED: That Councillor Humphreys replaces Councillor Constable on Planning Committee.

207 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS:

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce and seconded by Councillor Greatorex “that the Calendar of Meetings as submitted by approved.”

Councillor Norman asked that once the diary was adopted it should be stuck to as far as possible as Parishes in the District tried to fit around the District Council meeting dates.

Councillor Mynott said that it would have been useful if the changes had been highlighted and felt that there should be an opportunity to review the role of Employment Committee having regard to changes being made at the District Council. The Chairman of the Council reminded Councillor Mynott that the Calendar of Meetings was put forward for approval of the dates and that he should contact the Leader of the Council regarding any requests to review the role of committees.

Councillor Isaacs said that it would be helpful if details of meetings were emailed through Outlook to Members so that they could be accepted and recorded in diaries with changes being made as and when necessary.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the Calendar of Meetings as submitted be approved.

208 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION:

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce, seconded by Councillor Greatorex and

RESOLVED: That the changes to the Constitution as submitted be approved.

209 PROPOSALS FROM THE CABINET:

(a) Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2015-18 and the Council Tax Resolution 2015/16

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce and seconded by Councillor Greatorex "that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2015-18 and the Council Tax Resolution 2015/16 as submitted be approved."

Councillor Spruce presented the report to Members and said that the estimates were on current figures highlighting changes that would need to be implemented. Councillor Spruce referred to the £1.3 million funding gap which would be dealt with under the Fit for the Future proposals and made reference to the Capital Revenue Support Grant which was being reduced.

Councillor Spruce informed Members that the Council Tax Resolution Document could only be issued that day as information from the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service had only just been received.

Councillor Norman considered that the budget put forward was not that of the Labour Group and commented that he did not think that it was the budget of the Conservative Group as it was dictated by Mr E. J. Pickles (Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government). Councillor Norman also reminded Members that in 1999 when the Labour Group ceased to be in control of the District Council £25.4 million was in the bank and the District Council was debt free but that the resources had been, in his view, wasted by the Controlling Group.

Councillor White commented that whilst the District Council had been very prudent with its budgets other authorities who had large reserves that they could rely on and so had not needed to increase Council Tax. Councillor White highlighted that more efficient working practices had been introduced and mentioned the use of resources in the

building of the Burntwood Leisure Centre and Garrick Theatre which had improved the District.

In order to comply with Statutory Regulations a Named Vote was taken and recorded as follows:

FOR (33)	AGAINST (0)	ABSTAIN (9)
Allsopp, Mrs J. A.		Drinkwater, E. N.
Arnold, Mrs S. P.	.	Evans, Mrs C. D.
Awty, R. J.		Heath, H. R.
Bacon, B. F.		Isaacs, D.
Bacon, Mrs N.	.	Mynott, G.
Barnett, Mrs S. A.		Norman, S. G.
Boyle, Mrs M. G.		Taylor, S. D.
Constable, Mrs. B. L.		Walker, J. T.
Constable, D. H. J.		Willis-Croft, K. A.
Cox, R. E.		
Derrick, B. W.		
Eagland, Mrs J. M.		
Fisher, Mrs H. E.		
Flowith, Mrs L. E.		
Greatorex, C.		
Hancocks, Mrs R.		
Hogan, P.		
Humphreys, K. P.		
Leytham, D. J.		
Marshall, T.		
Pearce, A. G.		
Pritchard, I. M. P.		
Roberts, N. J.		
Smedley, D.		
Smith, A. F.		
Smith, D. S.		
Spruce, C. J.		
Stanhope, Mrs. M.		
Strachan, R. W.		
Tranter, Mrs H.		
Warfield, M. A.		
White, A. G.		
Wilcox, M. J.		

It was then

RESOLVED: That the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Revenue and Capital) 2015-18 and the Council Tax Resolution 2015-16 as submitted be approved.

(b) Annual Action Plan 2015/16

It was proposed by Councillor Greatorex and seconded by Councillor Spruce “that the Annual Action Plan 2015/16 as submitted be approved.”

Councillor Greatorex in submitting the proposal informed Members that there was now less control by Central Government over Performance Indicators enabling each Directorate to highlight its own Top 10 and confirmed that the Action Plan had taken account of the consultation exercise that had been undertaken with the public and the reviews that were being carried out.

It was then

RESOLVED: That the Annual Action Plan 2015/16 as submitted be approved.

210 LICHFIELD DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME:

It was proposed by Councillor Pritchard and seconded by Councillor Wilcox “that the recommendations contained within the report submitted be approved.”

In submitting the report Councillor Pritchard said that this stage had been a long time coming and paid tribute to Councillors Roberts and White for their work in leading on the Local Plan at various times. Councillor Pritchard also thanked all Officers involved over the years and reminded Members that the recommendations made by the Inspector should be taken on board if the Local Plan was to be sound. Councillor White thanked all staff for their work in getting the District Council to the stage reached and reminded Members that the Local Plan was setting out plans for future generations.

Councillor Drinkwater said that he considered that the Local Plan was very important for the Burntwood Area as he understood that national retailers were awaiting for the Local Plan to be adopted before making decisions on retail opportunities.

Councillor Mrs Stanhope said that this was the third Local Plan that she had been involved in and commented that as there was a lot of pressure to get more housing in the District of Lichfield it was important to get the plan right. Councillor Roberts added his thanks to the Officers involved in preparing the plan through many years and this was supported by Councillor Isaacs.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the recommendations contained within the submitted report be approved.

(COUNCILLOR MRS FLOWITH HAVING REGARD TO HER PREVIOUS DECLARATION LEFT THE MEETING BEFORE THIS ITEM WAS CONSIDERED).

211 QUESTIONS:

Question 1

Question from Councillor Mynott to the Leader of the Council:

“Could the Leader of the Council explain what steps have been taken to ensure that the council’s redundancy procedure is open and transparent and that voluntary redundancy and early retirement options are offered consistently in the first instance in all affected directorates?”

Councillor Wilcox responded:

“Making an employee of the council redundant is always a very difficult thing to do and the council will do its very best to avoid making someone compulsorily redundant. As Members will know, the council is going through a period of change and in recent years we have reduced the size of the establishment. But the council makes posts redundant, not individuals, and so whenever there is pressure for change - for economic or operational reasons - the council will consider very carefully the impact on staff.

Whenever there is concern about the future of a post, or a team or a service, managers will talk to them to describe the process and will seek to engage the union at the earliest opportunity. To guide the process, the council has a Redundancy Policy, which is applied consistently across directorates.

But before we make people redundant, we will seek alternative relevant positions for them elsewhere in the council either because those positions are vacant or because there is another individual that wishes to be considered for voluntary redundancy or early retirement. Voluntary redundancy is covered by the Redundancy Policy and there is a Retirement Policy.

Requests for voluntary redundancy or early retirement are considered on a case by case basis, as and when they arise, but they are accepted only if they are in the interest of the council; decisions on what posts should go must be driven by the needs of the Council and not designed around individual preferences or choices – as we have stated earlier it is the post not the member of staff that is made redundant , though the obvious personal implications of this decision are considered carefully.

Where compulsorily redundancies are unavoidable, rigorous and fair selection processes are used to identify the posts to go. The unions are involved in this process throughout.

The unions are advised through the council's Employee Liaison Group when a business case for voluntary redundancy or early retirement is accepted, . The approval of Employment Committee is sought where there are pension costs to be met, and are advised of the proposal where there is not. Finally, redundancies are confirmed only when Full Council has received the minutes of Employment Committee."

Councillor Mynott asked the following Supplementary Question:-

"Can the Leader confirm that all employees in all affected areas are given an equal opportunity to apply for Voluntary Redundancy?"

Councillor Wilcox responded:-

"All employees are treated the same but a Business Case needs to be produced in connection with each application."

Question 2

Question from Councillor Willis-Croft to the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Development:

1. "What 106 money has been spent in the Chasetown Ward in the last five years?
2. What will be spent in the future?"

Councillor Pritchard responded:

- "1. £65,337 has been spent in the Chasetown Ward on 10 different projects.
2. It is almost impossible to forecast exactly the amount that will be spent on the Chasetown Ward in the future, but I hope the following information is of assistance:
 - 13% of the growth (approx. 1350) of the housing is expected to be delivered in Burntwood in the plan period - some of which has been built, some that has permission and some due to come forward via the Strategic Development Allocations
 - At present we are consulting with the Parish Council Ward Members on £26,000 that we received in SOC2 funds from the development 7 - 9 High St. Chasetown.

- Future S106 funds, once triggers have been reached will be monitored collected and allocated in the same way.
- Once CIL is in place S106 contributions will be for onsite requirements only -CIL will be key to delivering key infrastructure and Parishes will get 15% / 25% to spend on local priorities.

Question 3

Question from Councillor Norman to the Leader of Council:

“Can he set out the main issues raised by Scrutiny Members at the recent Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held to discuss the Service Plans? This would reassure members that appropriate notes were taken by the officers so that lead members responsible for those Service Plans will action them”.

Councillor Wilcox responded:

“The main issues raised by Scrutiny Members at the recent Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held to discuss the Service Plans are set out below: -

Plan for Communications

- The Lichfield District Council average for working days lost varied between the different Service Plans.
- A query was raised regarding the Communications Team undertaking work on behalf of the Lichfield Garrick.

Plan for Democratic and Legal Services

- Reference was made to the amount of resource spent on the Overview & Scrutiny functions compared with other functions of the Council.
- Confirmation was sought on whether any hard copies of the Year Book were still produced.
- The need for training in the Overview & Scrutiny function was identified

A Plan for Elections and Licensing

- Concern was expressed by the local Member that there were no poll cards produced for the Fazeley Town By-election in August 2014. It was confirmed that Fazeley Town Council had chosen not to have Poll Cards produced.
- It was noted that there was a discrepancy on the number of applications referred to in the section “Our Customers”, compared with the section “Looking Back – Performance and Achievements”.
- An assurance was sought regarding the postal vote application process.
- Concern raised again regarding the working days lost figure.
- Concern expressed about the late distribution of Service Plans

A Plan for Land and Property Services

- Concern was expressed about the delay in transferring assets to Burntwood Town Council.
- Suggestion that we look at turning off the security lights in the Council House outside of opening hours.
- Concern was expressed that the Council was seeking to dispose of assets, but once they were disposed of they would be lost to the Council for good.

A Plan for Business Support Services, Revenues and Benefits Service, Information, Communication, Technology and Procurement 2015-16

- The Plan was comprehensive and well written
- The Team were thanked and congratulated on the Service Plan and its contents.

The Service Planning Process will be the subject of a discussion at the Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Group on 19 February 2015.

Councillor Norman asked the following Supplementary Question:-

“Whilst I appreciate that action has now been taken was he aware that there were different figures for the District Council own average figure for different directorates?”

Councillor Wilcox responded:

“My answer is set out in the document circulated.”

Question 4

Question from Councillor Steve Norman to the Leader of Council:

“In his reply to my question tabled at the Council meeting held on the 9th of December 2014 (Minute 162 refers) to ascertain when Cabinet members spoke at Council on behalf of the Cabinet and when they spoke in a private capacity he claimed that Councillor Greatorex (the Cabinet Member for Community, Housing & Environmental Health) was speaking in a personal capacity when he congratulated the Coalition on the Spare Room Subsidy or “Bedroom Tax” as it is referred to more commonly. However when members were asked to “..support the Spare Room Subsidy Legislation in its present form” Councillor Greatorex and he voted against the amendment”.

Can he tell me:

- a) Does the Cabinet support his Party’s policy on the Spare Room Subsidy?
- b) Does his Group support the current legislation?
- c) Can members of his Cabinet consider wearing a badge or some other form of identification so members can know whether they are speaking as themselves or in the role (for which they receive remuneration) as a Member of the Cabinet?”

Councillor Wilcox responded:

- “a) The Cabinet does feel that there has been benefit from the Under Occupation benefits.
- b) The Controlling Group does feel that there has been benefit from the Under Occupation benefits legislation.

- c) The circumstances relating to each question will differ and so will the nature of the response. Members may speak on Cabinet decisions as Cabinet Members where the whole Cabinet has discussed the matter and individually where the matter is not related to agreed Cabinet policy.

For instance, if Cllr Norman was asked "if Ed Miliband was an asset or a liability to the Labour Party" he would have to answer in a personal capacity rather than on behalf of the the Shadow Cabinet or Labour Group at Lichfield, unless these bodies had previously debated the merits of Ed Miliband within the Party.

In short the answer to Cllr Norman's question on wearing badges is no."

Councillor Norman asked the following Supplementary Question:-

"I'm not a member of his Cabinet, but he is, so can he answer in a personal or corporate capacity and state whether Mr Fabricant is a great advocate for Lichfield District or, as most of us believe, an acute embarrassment?"

Councillor Wilcox responded:-

"That question is not relevant to the original question."

Question 5

Question from Councillor Norman to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Democratic and Legal Services.:

"In his reply to my question tabled at the Council meeting held on the 9th of December 2014 (Minute 162 refers) Councillor Spruce gave a figure of £138,730 in reply to my question on expenditure in personnel terms for scrutiny.

Can he now tell me what the actual figure is for direct support to the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees to enable them to properly to carry out their Scrutiny role in holding the Cabinet and Leadership Team to account?"

Councillor Spruce responded:-

"The figure is not broken down to identify direct support to Chairmen of Overview & Scrutiny Committees".

Councillor Norman asked the following Supplementary Question:-

"As Councillor Spruce is not able or is too embarrassed to answer the question does he agree with me that this confirms the report of the Peer Review on how poor scrutiny is done at Lichfield District Council as we saw earlier in the meeting?"

Councillor Spruce responded as follows:-

"The figures provided are the best estimate that can be given as Officers do not keep detailed worksheets."

(Councillor Mrs Barnett left the meeting at the end of this item).

212 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

213 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ON CABINET DECISIONS FROM THE MEETINGS HELD ON 13 JANUARY AND 3 FEBRUARY 2015:

The Leader of the Council submitted his Confidential Report on Cabinet Decisions from the meetings held on 13 January and 3 February 2015.

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

Councillor Marshall submitted his Confidential Report on the matters considered by the Community, Housing and Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 14 January 2015.

2 – Empty Property at 304 Chase Road Burntwood WS7 0DY

Councillor Isaacs welcomed the action that was being taken but hoped that in future action could be taken quicker for the benefit of local residents. Councillor Marshall agreed with the sentiment expressed by Councillor Isaac but said that the District Council was constrained by legislation.

214 CONFIDENTIAL REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Cox submitted his Confidential Report on the matters considered by the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 20 January 2015.

(The Meeting closed at 8.00 pm)

CHAIRMAN