

IM/04/22

Minutes of an **Interim Council Meeting** of Buckingham Town Council held at 7pm on Monday 7th November 2022 in the Council Chamber, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham.

Present:

Cllr. R. Ahmed	
Cllr. M. Cole JP	
Cllr. F. Davies	
Cllr. M. Gateley	Town Mayor/Chair
Cllr. J. Harvey	
Cllr. S. Hetherington	
Cllr. A. Mahi	
Cllr. H. Mordue	
Cllr. L. O'Donoghue	
Cllr. A. Osibogun	
Cllr. A. Ralph	
Cllr. R. Stuchbury	
Cllr. M. Try	
Cllr. W. Whyte	
Cllr. R. Willett	

Also present:

Ms. L. Stubbs	Deputy Town Clerk
Ms. P. Cahill	Committee Clerk
Mr. Barber	Police and Crime Commissioner

No members of the public attended and so there was no public session.

391/22 Apologies for absence

Members received apologies from Cllr. Schaefer.

392/22 Declarations of interest

There were none.

393/22 Police and Crime Commissioner

Members hosted the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Matthew Barber, for a question-and-answer session.

Cllr. Cole put the following two questions to the Police and Crime Commissioner:

1. This Council, having been involved in the 2021 consultation about closing Thames Valley Police front desks as a cost-saving exercise, asks how TVP can justify wasting £14.4m of taxpayers' money in pulling out of the Equip IT venture being developed with Surrey and Sussex forces, in which it was the major partner. Prior to the May 2021 elections, TVP was also asking for an increase to its council tax precept to provide more officers. This waste of council taxpayers' money appears to be at odds with that, and we would ask the TV Police Commissioner to justify this profligacy.
2. We would also ask what is the latest situation on counter closures, given that TVP itself noted 51%, a majority, of those taking part in the consultation were opposed to it.

The PCC apologised for the length of time that Buckingham Town Council has awaited a response. He said that he cannot justify the pulling out of the Equip IT venture but he

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wasn't the PCC at the time. Changes have been put in place to mitigate this and the Chief Constable will manage this.

Regarding counter closures, the PCC informed Members that front counters (not police stations) are costly and usually manned by civilians. These counters were rarely used by the public and he would rather put the money into frontline policing.

Cllr. Cole thanked the PCC for his response.

Cllr. Harvey put his question to the PCC:

3. Lots of local people say that they never (or hardly ever) see a police officer or PCSO which just adds to their fear of crime and makes them question why are they paying council tax for an 'invisible' service. What is your strategy to provide our local residents with the psychological security of feeling that there is a real police presence in our town?

The PCC responded that a long-term reduction in crime, alongside a physical police presence, will make people feel safe. Strategies that he is working on with the Chief Constable include:

- More police officers in Thames Valley than ever before. There is a delay before these officers will be seen on the streets due to the 2–3 years training required. The PCC would like to use these new officers to increase the size of community policing teams.
- The PCC is hoping to over-achieve the Home Office target for recruitment by the end of the year.

The PCC also spoke speculatively about the possibility of using messenger apps to report suspicious activities and of automating processes that update residents on cases to reduce time spent by 101 on these enquiries.

Cllr. Gateley asked if the fear of crime is greater than the reality. The PCC said it is almost definitely true, but fears are taken seriously and reassurance is needed.

Cllr. Harvey thanked the PCC for his response and asked if there was a measure of the level of fear of crime across the Thames Valley.

The PCC highlighted a survey on the APPC website which asks about the experiences of people who have been victims of crime. This will create comparable data. [StreetSafe](#), by the Home Office, can also be used to report places where people don't feel safe.

The PCC talked about the Swift Justice system which was launched in July this year to tackle knife crime; this has been used in Slough already to ensure the swift arrest and imprisonment of someone carrying a knife. This sends a message to those who carry knives with no intention of committing a crime

Cllr. Gateley thanked the PCC for attending this meeting.

394/22 Bleed Kits

Members received a report from the Town Clerk.

It is recommended that a one-off payment of £400 be given to the Bletchley Lions Club to pay 50% of the cost of purchasing 10 Bleed Kits for distribution to suitable businesses in

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the Parish of Buckingham. This funding would come from budget 132/4500 – Future planning and contingencies.

Cllr. Stuchbury Proposed, Cllr. O'Donoghue Seconded. Members unanimously **AGREED** the recommendation.

395/22 Motion: Cllr. Stuchbury, Seconded by Cllr. Cole

That Buckingham Town Council seeks an early meeting with the appropriate Buckinghamshire Council officers to obtain the maximum amount of information relating to future development plans for Buckingham. Key areas include, but are not limited to, housing numbers, highways development infrastructure and education provision as they relate to the revised Buckingham Neighbourhood Plan. Any such plan needs to be drafted in a robust and legal manner, thus recognising and being capable of informing future decisions by Buckingham Town Council.

After discussion a recorded vote was taken, and the results were:

For: Cllr. Gateley, Cllr. Stuchbury, Cllr. Cole, Cllr. Willett, Cllr. Mahi, Cllr. Ralph, Cllr. Ahmed, Cllr. Hetherington, Cllr. Harvey, Cllr. Davies, Cllr. O'Donoghue.

Against: None

Abstention: Cllr. Mordue, Cllr. Osibogun, Cllr. Try, Cllr. Whyte

The Motion was carried.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

396/22 Reply from Mr Greg Smith MP

Cllr. Whyte declared an interest in this agenda item.

Members received and noted the reply received from Mr. Greg Smith MP.

397/22 Ward Boundary Changes

Members discussed and **AGREED** the recommended response to the Local Government Boundary Commission consultation on Buckinghamshire Council wards as agreed by the Ward Boundary Working Group.

Cllr. Mordue asked that the Standards Board and the Boundaries Commission were both informed of the response.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

A vote was taken, and the results were:

For: 14

Against: 0

Abstentions: 2

398/22 Chair's announcements

Cllr. Gateley requested that Councillors return any high vis jackets to the office this week.

Christmas social: Councillors are invited for a drink on 28th November at the Grand Junction after the Full Council meeting.

399/22 Date of next meetings: Full Council: Monday 28th November 2022
Interim Council: Monday 9th January 2023

Meeting closed at 8pm

Signed

Date

7th November 2022

Draft

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PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY 2010/CRIME AND DISORDER ACT, 1988: the decisions made during the course of the meeting were duly considered and it was decided that there were no resulting direct or indirect implications in respect of crime and disorder, or equalities considerations, other than those stated in the minutes.

Initial.....