

COUNCIL

28th March 2017

Present: **The Mayor, Councillor P. Denham in the Chair**

Councillors Agar, Amos, Bayliss, Berry, Biggs, Cawthorne, Cronin, L. Denham, Ditta, Feeney, Geraghty, Gregson, Hodges, Mrs L. Hodgson, S. Hodgson, Johnson, Jones, Knight, Lacey, Lamb, Laurenson, Mackay, Mitchell, Riaz, Roberts, G. Squires, J. Squires, Stafford, Stanley, Stephen, Udall, E. Williams and G. Williams

The Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Jim Brown, offered prayers prior to the start of the Council meeting

85 Apologies for Absence

None.

86 Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Mrs Lucy Hodgson – Report from the Leader of the Council on Decisions Taken by Cabinet (Minute 94) – As a member of the Corporation of Heart of Worcestershire College.

Councillor Lacey – Report from the Leader of the Council, Chairman of Relevant Committee or Committee Member on Matters which are Referred to Council for Decision in Respect of the New Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan (Minute 93) – Due to the nature of his employment.

Councillors Berry and Roberts – Report from the Leader of the Council, Chairman of Relevant Committee or Committee Member on Matters which are Referred to Council for Decision in Respect of Advance Payment of Pension Forwarding Fund (Minute 93) – As beneficiaries of the Worcestershire County Pension Fund.

Councillors Gregson and Jones – Report from the Leader of the Council, Chairman of Relevant Committee or Committee Member on Matters which are Referred to Council for Decision in Respect of Advance Payment of Pension Forwarding Fund (Minute 93) – As future beneficiaries of the Worcestershire County Pension Fund.

87 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

88 Mayor's Communications

Charity Auction and Concert

The Mayor thanked everyone who had attended the recent Charity Spring Concert by Worcester Concert Brass and the Auction in support of the Mayor's Charities, including those who had not been able to attend but had made a donation.

Forthcoming Events

The Mayor reminded the Council of forthcoming events to be held at the Guildhall:

1st April – Mayor's Charity Shaken Not Stirred Casino Night

18th April – Annual Medical Lecture

25th April – Annual Civic Society Lecture

Flying of National Flags

The Mayor stated that a number of overseas nations' flags had been flown at the Guildhall recently when receiving visitors from those countries. This would encourage people to take and share photographs of the Guildhall, and thus generate publicity for Worcester, and he hoped his successors would carry on the tradition.

David Wilkinson

The Mayor made reference to the recent resignation of David Wilkinson as a Councillor for Bedwardine Ward. He highlighted some of his achievements during his time as a Councillor. Other Members also spoke and paid tribute.

Invitation to the Parlour

The Mayor invited Members of the Council to join him in the Parlour for refreshments after the Council meeting.

89 Public Participation

None.

90 Questions

| Question No. 1 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Lucy Hodgson |
| Question To: | Councillor Joy Squires – Deputy Leader / Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources |
| Question: | Could the Cabinet Member for Finance please tell me how many consultants are working for the Council? Could she please tell me the length of time they have worked for the Council; the average cost of each appointment; the areas of the Council that they have been employed? |
| Answer: | There have been a total of 11 consultants used by the City Council during 2016/17 including 3 covering the following: Director of Corporate Finance (6 months); Deputy Director of Economic Development (8 months); and Interim Head of Contracts Performance (6 months). In respect of the other posts, 4 have been employed to oversee specific projects such as the delivery of the new Perdiswell Pool, those contracts range from 2 to 16 months, whilst 3 have been employed on short-term contracts of 3 months or less in support of developing |

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| | <p>the transformation plans for the Council. One other contractor has been employed on an on-going part-time basis (one day a week) in respect of nature conservation.</p> <p>The average cost of each appointment is £440 per day. All 11 contracts have been formally terminated as of 31st March 2017 and specific new contracts have been awarded where appropriate from 1st April based on agreed outcomes-based targets.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary Question:</p> | <p>Thank you for that detailed answer and the information. In the Worcester News on 6th January, it was reported – I have the paper in front of me - the words in the paper were that 28 posts were going to be slashed, along with a cull in the use of consultants and agency staff as part of the forthcoming budget. Perhaps the Cabinet Member for Finance could explain to me – I noticed that she said it’s 11 contracts that have been terminated and new contracts will be starting as of 1st April – perhaps she could explain if that is actually part of this process that was talked about in the initial discussions around the budget process?</p> |
| <p>Answer:</p> | <p>Okay, thanks, I think I understood the question. What I would say is that the budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan set out, over a 3 -5 year period in fact, plans to bring the City Council back on the right track to achieving £2.7m worth of budget savings, and also most importantly, transforming the organisation so that it becomes more agile, more responsive, more able to cope with changing demands and delivering excellence in everything we do. To achieve that, we have needed external help during the course of this year, and we will need some external help – not to the same extent but some external help – to maintain the progress that we need to make on all of those things.</p> <p>I would say that the consultants we have engaged have all added considerable value to the work that the City Council does, and you’ll be aware that this has been a year of very rapid progress on a number of projects, some of which will be on-going of course, but projects like the Swimming Pool, Cathedral Square, Broad Street, the old Swimming Pool site at Sansome Walk. So, I have certainly valued that help. I have also valued the external analysis that our consultants have brought to bear on how we do things as a Council, not everybody has felt as comfortable with that as I have, but that said it’s always important to have an external view. But I would agree that we do have to be cautious in our use of external consultants and make sure we’re getting value for money, and I do believe that the review of contracts that has just taken place should assist us with this.</p> |

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| Question No. 2 – Exempt Item |
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The Mayor advised the Council that this question would be dealt with in exempt session as it related to information about former employees of the Council.

| Question No. 3 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Andy Roberts |
| Question To: | Councillor Lynn Denham – Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities |
| Question: | Although not reported in the Cabinet Meeting or scrutinized elsewhere I understand that increases in the levels of youth anti-social behaviour (particularly in Warndon) and burglaries (notably in Battenhall) have entered into the red zone being at least 10% worse than last year. Is this something that is being considered by the City Council? |
| Answer: | <p>Thank you, Councillor Roberts, for your question. The answers possibly were available to you in papers that you have. The short answer to your question is yes, these crime figures are considered by the City Council. In fact they were discussed in detail at the Safer Worcester meeting which took place on 9th February, which Councillor Roberts didn't attend.</p> <p>The figures you quote appear to be from the analyst's report which was presented at the meeting, with the Police and other partners who are interested in community safety in Worcester. You selected some statistics, and perhaps it's worth explaining those in a little more detail to colleagues and perhaps explaining some of the other statistics that you haven't drawn attention to.</p> <p>With regard to anti-social behaviour, overall the total figures have only seen a small increase across the city. One of the key things to say to preface anything about crime statistics is that the Police and national guidance have led to a change in recording protocols and this has impacted on trend analysis in crime figures, so year-on-year comparisons are no longer comparing exactly the same thing, which makes discussion quite problematic.</p> <p>Going back to anti-social behaviour data that was discussed at the Safer Worcester meeting in February, alcohol-related anti-social behaviour actually rated green performance and a considerable reduction, which was quite pleasing.</p> <p>So, coming to the figures for youth-related anti-social behaviour within Warndon, this was comparing month-on-month increases, so comparing December to January the increase in Warndon was from 9 reports in</p> |

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| | <p>December to 21 reports in January.</p> <p>Coming onto the figures for dwellings from burglaries in Battenhall, 7 reports were made in January and the comments within the analyst's report say this is not an area usually associated with dwellings in burglaries. Obviously, every burglary is extremely distressing for the victims. I think you need to be aware that other Wards suffer considerably more from this blight than Battenhall. There are variations in figures due to individual criminals, patterns of behaviour and opportunities. Overall, Worcester remains a very safe city.</p> |
| Supplementary Question: | <p>Just to clarify, I took advice on this. I'm very grateful for the full answer, I was told this is a closed meeting, and a decision has not yet been made on whether the minutes are open or not, it's another of these secret things. So I'm very grateful to the Councillor for giving that information. She could not have done, because it could have been out of order, of course, because it's not an open meeting. I was going to ask a supplementary question about absence of people who might have been working on this job and are no longer with us, but I'm afraid that would probably be ruled out of order, so I'm stymied again.</p> |
| Answer: | <p>I didn't actually hear a question in there. The Safer Worcester meeting is not a public meeting in the sense that this is a public meeting. Councillors are invited to attend, partners are invited to attend and business and information is shared.</p> |

| Question No. 4 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Neil Laurenson |
| Question To: | Councillor Lynn Denham – Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities |
| Question: | Please could you tell me what the current usage of glyphosate on council-owned land in Worcester is? |
| Answer: | <p>Thank you for the question. I'm sure our officers could have probably answered this directly without need to take up time this evening or using me as a mouthpiece. Anyway, glyphosate is more commonly know as "Round Up" and is widely available for public use. It is used in limited quantities on Council land to control weeds. It is injected into the stems of Japanese Knotweed, an invasive pernicious weed that crowds out native plants and is notoriously difficult to eradicate. It is also used in small amounts for spot treatment of weeds. The estimate was that Officers used about 12 litres over the last year.</p> |
| Supplementary Question: | I'll preface my question with an acknowledgment that it is unfortunate that I've taken time in the meeting to ask that question, but I have emailed the same question – albeit spelling glyphosate incorrectly – three times over |

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| | the last few weeks and have not yet had a response. So, my last resort was to ask the question tonight. |
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| Question No. 5 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Richard Udall |
| Question To: | Councillor Joy Squires – Deputy Leader / Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources |
| Question: | In the light of the recent Ofsted judgment of Worcestershire Children's Services as 'inadequate', can the Cabinet Member with responsibility for safeguarding outline what role the City Council plays in keeping children safe? |
| Answer: | <p>Thank you for the question, Councillor Udall. I think it's fair to say that the inadequate rating given to Children's Services by Ofsted probably rated for me at least as one of the most shocking events of the year, and I know I am not alone in the huge anger I felt that our children have been failed so badly and place at risk of harm.</p> <p>Worcester City Council is in a unique position in that four of the County Council Cabinet Members with responsibility for Children's Services – including the Portfolio Holder and indeed the Leader of the County Council – sit opposite us as City Councillors, and I'm sure that they feel the very heavy burden of that responsibility, although I see today that the Portfolio Holder will in fact not be returning to the County Council, so yet again Children's Services will have another change of Portfolio Holder to add to the changes that have happened previously.</p> <p>Although Worcestershire County Council and West Mercia Police are the lead agencies in the County with regard to child protection and safeguarding, this Council is very, very clear indeed that everyone has a responsibility for protecting children and adults at risk, including all employees and elected Members. It's both a corporate and an individual responsibility.</p> <p>The Council's policy and procedures are designed to protect and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk who are using or receiving services provided or commissioned by the Council, and to support the Council's officers, elected Members and volunteers in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. There is a corporate group which meets quarterly to review and coordinate the delivery of a safeguarding plan and that covers awareness training and reporting of concerns to the County Council Children's Services. All staff undertake on-line training, in fact all staff are currently in the process of refreshing that training. Frontline staff in Cleaner and Greener have all received face-to-face training in safeguarding. Housing staff attend multi-</p> |

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| | <p>agency meetings to consider at risk individuals and a City Officer represents the Worcestershire Districts at the County level Corporate Parenting Board with regard to housing issues, and as safeguarding lead Member I also attend the regular meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board.</p> <p>We are currently reviewing requirements for our contracted services with regard to training and reporting procedures to ensure that this mirrors our in-house arrangements, and I think that's a very important aspect of our role. Having the right policies and procedures, together with regular and appropriate training, are all ways in which the City Council discharges its responsibilities toward safeguarding, but there is absolutely no room for complacency and I think it's incumbent on us all to understand safeguarding issues and constantly monitor and review our practice. I hope there may be a way to ensure Members receive regular reports on safeguarding under the new governance arrangements.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary Question:</p> | <p>I'm glad Councillor Squires has managed to confirm the responsibilities that City Councillors have, as I understand a number of Councillors did know that they have a responsibility in this area. I understand some Members with an interest in such matters may soon have much more time available on their hands to help with this function. What role can he – or any other City Councillor – play in helping to keep children safe in Worcestershire?</p> |
| <p>Answer:</p> | <p>Members have an absolutely key role to play in keeping children and vulnerable adults safe, not least because we have considerable contact with the public and most of us, I'm sure, will have had occasions when we wondered whether we should report something that has concerned us. There's very little mandatory training for Councillors, believe it or not. I believe that training in safeguarding and child sexual exploitation should be mandatory for all councils, and I see from the nods across the floor that that is something we can all agree on. During the year I've taken steps as safeguarding lead to move towards this, and a number of Members have now completed online training in safeguarding through the City Council's Learning Lounge, but not all of us have done that, so that's something I would like to see happen.</p> <p>We certainly need a concerted effort to ensure that we all complete this training. Not only would that build our confidence in understanding the issues and what to do if we come across a concern, but I genuinely believe it would build the public's confidence in us that we're taking our duties and responsibilities seriously. Again, I hope that's something that can be taken up under the</p> |

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| | new governance arrangements, so that we can be absolutely clear and reach agreement on what mandatory training we should all have as Councillors. Thank you. |
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| Question No. 6 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Roger Knight |
| Question To: | Councillor Lynn Denham – Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities |
| Question: | Having agreed that £20,000 be allocated in the budget for the planting trees in areas of poor air quality, would Councillor Lynn Denham please tell me when these trees will be planted, how many trees are to be planted and where these trees will be located? |
| Answer: | Thank you for your question, we all know your interest in trees, and all that you have done to increase tree planting in some parts of the city over the past two years. With regard to the £20,000 that was voted in by Council only last month, it's too early to provide the detail that you asked for. The funding is for the next financial year, and the next tree planting season is not until next winter. |
| Supplementary Question: | Disappointing answer, I thought that we'd at least know how many trees we are going to plant. I did read in one newspaper that it was 10, and I did wonder if these were gold leaf trees, as they did seem to be rather expensive. But I'm sure the Cabinet Member must have some idea of what the planting schedule would be. I mean what does £20,000 buy? What do we expect to get for £20,000? Now, I voted in favour of this amendment to the budget, but I voted in favour expecting to get value for money and I'd seriously question whether we will get value for money. If it is ten trees then someone needs to think again, so perhaps the Member opposite will give me a more full answer? |
| Answer: | <p>Thank you. As I said, the detailed piece of work is yet to come. We all know you can't believe every single thing you read in newspapers, they do tend to get things wrong. There is a considerable difference between planting trees in parks and green spaces, as opposed to the proposition that we're looking at here. Studies have shown that certain deciduous trees can capture particulate matter on the underside of their leaves, removing it from the air when leaves drop, so it can make a difference to air quality, but there are challenges in planting trees in areas which by their nature are narrow urban canyons, where there isn't an obvious space to put trees.</p> <p>There will be required consultation with the highways authority and other aspects that don't necessarily arise in the park, such as potential obstruction of sightlines for</p> |

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| | CCTV, so it's going to be a much more complex process to actually look and what trees, what's based where, and how many to what effect, and that is the sum that Council voted for. |
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| Question No. 7 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Lucy Hodgson |
| Question To: | Councillor Marc Bayliss – Chair of Scrutiny Committee |
| Question: | Do you agree with me that all Scrutiny will still have an important role and will be encouraged in the new committee system? |
| Answer: | Yes, absolutely true, scrutiny has played an important part in the governance arrangements of this Council over recent years and new arrangements, new ways of making scrutiny work must be part of the move back to the Committee system. As we saw – unfortunately the Ofsted report has been quoted tonight, so – as we saw up the road, when scrutiny fails, that is a big issue for service delivery. I would say, however, that we have to make sure that scrutiny of not just of external organisations but internal scrutiny of our own activities is also bolted into our new system. |
| Supplementary Question: | Thank you for that. I am certainly passionate about scrutiny, and I am very glad to hear that it is going to be part and parcel of our new system, and embedded in it. However, it does appear that maybe some of our senior Members are perhaps not as keen, and I understand that they might look at ways to close down scrutiny, and also question some of the minutes of recent scrutiny meetings, and I wonder how you feel about this? |
| Answer: | <p>Thank you for the supplementary. I have to say, I'm afraid throughout this year there have been several attempts by very senior Members of the Administration to curtail the legitimate actions of Members in scrutinising the activities of this Council.</p> <p>I have 3 quotes here. There are at least 6 emails, missives. I think these must have been written late at night, when somebody was tired, but: "Dear x, I see from the local paper and have heard reports from the meeting that you are still perpetuating lies about redundancies. Please have the decency for the sake of officers and other Councillors to retract your comments and admit they are at best inaccurate and at worst a lie, which it really is."</p> <p>That was one, another one: "Dear Councillor x, please could you provide by return a specific list of service standards which have been reduced or referred to in your interview with the Worcester News? I'd like to reiterate there have been no changes in services. If you refer to such in public, I must insist on your evidence if it is</p> |

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| | <p>important for us to keep on top of miscreants.”</p> <p>Number 3: “Thank you so much, x for using the local press to point out what everybody already knows about misprinted letters. Unfortunately, you omitted to mention that the fault lies with a private company who did it and have to pay instead of the Council. Perhaps you can contact the paper again and explain the failings of this private sector organisation.”</p> <p>These are just 3 of half a dozen examples of late-night rants from a senior Member of the Administration to Members of this Council who do not answer to him, they answer to the public and will never be cowed and stop doing their legitimate role of scrutiny of this Council.</p> |
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| Question No. 8 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Alan Amos |
| Question To: | Councillor Adrian Gregson – Leader of the Council |
| Question: | <p>Given that dog fouling is now a widespread and growing problem in Bedwardine with a very high number of alleyways; and given the number of complaints I have received recently about the condition of the alleyways, amongst others, between Hudson Close/Sherwood Lane/Swinton Lane, Foley Road/Bromwich Road, and Skinner Road/Pitmaston Road/Winchester Avenue; will he tell me what additional resources the Council is making available to deal with the problem, including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more thorough removal and cleansing of all dog mess; • increased frequency of inspections; • increased frequency of cleansing; • erection of more warning signs; • provision of more dog waste bins; • more resources for Poowatch; and • enhanced enforcement with a view to prosecution of offenders. |
| Answer: | <p>Thank you for the question. Dog fouling is undoubtedly unpleasant and an anti-social act. It’s perpetrated by a small number of irresponsible dog owners. It is not only an issue in the Councillor’s Ward. I can verify that it is an issue in my Ward as well.</p> <p>Bedwardine itself has a lot of alleyways which are used late at night by dog walkers, providing access to the various areas around the nurseries and market gardens, and as a result of the cutbacks by the County Council in street lighting, it often means residents often can’t see where they want to go. However, the responsibility quite clearly lies with the individual owners.</p> <p>An amendment to the budget to provide specific</p> |

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| | <p>additional resources was rejected by Council, so there is no additional budget to deal specifically with the Councillor's complaint, but as was also discussed at Council, I am informed that officers have responded to the complaints that you have raised and an additional dog waste bin and signs have been installed. An additional bin may help, but of course if the offending deposits are not bagged by the owner, then the bin is irrelevant.</p> <p>Additional enforcement patrols have been carried out in some areas but they are extremely resource intensive and are not a solution to the problem, because they of course need to catch somebody – an owner with a dog – at it at the time.</p> <p>The Poowatch initiative, which is operated from the Community Safety Partnership, has been successful in many areas, working with local communities in highlighting the issue, and I would suggest that Members continue to support their constituents in being involved in that.</p> <p>Zonal working means that each zone is visited every 2 weeks, and known hotspots are cleansed in line with that cycle.</p> |
| <p>Supplementary Question:</p> | <p>Can I thank Councillor Gregson for that answer, confirming that this Council will not be making sufficient funds available to deal with this huge and growing problem. So, isn't it appalling that this Labour Council can spend an amazing £20,000 to dig up Lowesmoor to plant a few trees, but refuses to provide sufficient resources to carry out one of its most basic functions, such as ensuring a clean and safe environment and streets?</p> |
| <p>Answer:</p> | <p>The Labour Council has no plans to dig up Lowesmoor, or to spend £20,000 on planting trees in Lowesmoor, in my knowledge. Indeed, the earlier question, which was put by the seconder of the motion regarding the trees, may have more information about where those trees should have been going. The motion was agreed by full Council, as we all know, and will go forward as related by Councillor Denham.</p> <p>It is certainly not the case that I will confirm that no more funds are available for the issue of dealing with irresponsible dog owners who allow their dogs to foul and do not collect it. I have already indicated that there is potential for additional dog waste bins to be located where there is seen to be a necessary demand. What is most interesting, of course, to see is how any enforcement will continue if there is new legislation about tackling dog owners to make sure they are carrying a</p> |

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| | bag, because presumably if you are not carrying a bag then you cannot collect the waste that your dog has left behind. |
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| Question No. 9 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Alan Amos |
| Question To: | Councillor Adrian Gregson – Leader of the Council |
| Question: | Does the Leader think that, given the known health dangers of dog mess particularly to young children, the current six week cleansing cycle is adequate to deal with accumulated dog mess at any time of the year but particularly in the heat of summer? |
| Answer: | Much of the answer to the question the Councillor raises has already been made. However, the zonal working pattern sees the cleansing team visit the zone every 2 weeks for one working day. The team carries out both scheduled cleansing of major routes and hotspots and addresses specific issues identified by the team supervisor or raised by residents and by Councillors. Cleansing alone of course is not a solution. The solution is to address the problem to the owners of the dogs. |
| Supplementary Question: | Thank you. Could I first off record my thanks to the staff of Cleaner and Greener for so diligently responding to all my requests for cleaning alleyways as I have reported to them recently. But, at the last Council meeting, and with reference to what the Leader just said, certain Labour Members said the solution is to educate dog fouling offenders. So can he tell me what education programme is now underway, where and how it is taking place, and when does he think it will have any noticeable effect? And finally, as he also mentioned it, when will the Council be filling the post of the Head of Poowatch, as the previous excellent Officer left sometime ago? |
| Answer: | <p>I believe the post of so-called "Head of Poowatch" is a voluntary one and requires some review. I'm very please to hear that the Councillor thanks staff for responding to his requests, but in a way that seems to counter his earlier statements about things not being done, so I do wish he would try and get his message straight.</p> <p>The Transformation Programme, which we have agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan and the budget setting, will make sure that street cleansing activity is reviewed, and the frequency of regular cleansing comes under review. Of course, this will be the responsibility of the new Environment Committee, when it comes into effect, and it will have the opportunity to scrutinise the work of officers when it comes in at June. However, it is true that the alleyways are being addressed and cleaned at approximately 6 weekly intervals. When specific issues are raised, they have been cleaned as requested and called upon.</p> |

| Question No. 10 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Chris Mitchell |
| Question To: | Councillor Joy Squires – Deputy Leader / Portfolio Holder for Performance and Resources |
| Question: | How much, in pounds, new income generation (excluding additional car parking income) have your administration generated in the last 12 months in power and how much of the Income Generation budget has been invested to generate this income? |
| Answer: | <p>Thanks very much for your question, Councillor Mitchell. I very much admire your tenacity in returning to this subject on such a regular basis. Clearly we have a shared commitment to ensuring that this Council finds new income streams, and particularly to help us face the challenges that lie ahead, which we all understand to be very considerable.</p> <p>Our Administration has generated just over £100,000 in new income generation. That has been primarily focussed on maximising the rental yields on our existing assets. Clearly there's a commercial sensitivity around this, so I have to be careful about what I say, but I am pleased to be able to say that the City Council will soon be in receipt of a significant amount of rental from an asset that has yielded no rent previously. We have also commissioned development of a major project earmarking £100k from the income generation budget which, certainly in my view and the view of this administration, has the potential to generate significant capital and/or revenue receipts to the City if adopted. Such is the nature of this project that cross-party support is required for it to go ahead and inevitably that affects the pace of progress. Other initiatives will of course be reported for consideration by the Income Sub-Committee under the new Committee structure in June.</p> |
| Supplementary Question: | At the risk of giving the Cabinet Resources Member an education in economics, so the return on our investment is zero? We've spent £100k and gained £100k, because that's what the equation works out at, even I could work that out without a calculator. But on that basis, what are we expecting in the next 12 months, and how much of our budget which this administration has put aside do you intend to spend on meeting that target? |
| Answer: | <p>Thanks for the supplementary, I'll refer back to what I said about the Income Generation Sub-Committee that's going to come into existence as part of the new arrangements, and it will be very much down to that Committee to look at the various ideas coming forward now.</p> <p>What I would say is that this Administration's approach has been very much to base decisions on evidence and</p> |

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| | <p>not speculation. We now have in place a system for testing feasibility of income generation proposals before deciding to use up the income generation budget, so that budget – the income generation budget – can actually generate income as opposed to being used up on speculative projects, which I think is what you would have let happen had you carried on in office. So, I'm please that we've put things back on a sound track, and I'm confident that working together in the new system we will actually come up with some quite significant income generation proposals going into the future.</p> |
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| Question No. 11 | |
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| Question From: | Councillor Alan Amos |
| Question To: | Councillor Adrian Gregson – Leader of the Council |
| Question: | <p>The problem of gulls has increased dramatically during the past year in Bedwardine with gull droppings covering people's houses - and windows in particular - washing on the line, and on cars all of which has to be removed quickly due to the acidic and toxic nature of the mess; as well as causing major disturbance to residents' sleep with gull screeching's from 4.00 a.m. onwards.</p> <p>These gulls have now established a huge nesting colony on Malverngate on Bromwich Road from which they are harassing and bombarding local residents.</p> <p>Therefore, will he tell me what action the Council is taking to deal with this problem in view of the fact that it has become such a serious health issue in the last 12 months?</p> |
| Answer: | <p>Like all the questions this evening, this is yet another one that could easily have been asked of an officer without the need to take up Council time. If you did, you would probably have received a more full statement than you arte going to get now. However, you will recall that there was a resolution of Council to allocate £15,000 for additional activity which, engaging the Scrutiny Committee, came up with a list, which I will read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and advice for public and businesses • Leaflet distribution to city centre businesses • Targeted engagement with city centre eateries with outdoor seating • Distribution of gull proof sacks for trade waste • Information Posters - "feed the bins not the birds" • Press releases about gulls coming back • Review of the street amenity policy • Preparation of specific planning advice for gull proofing • Expansion of the current egg replacement programme • Replacement of a number of open bins where gulls are known to feed |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of advice and dummy eggs to landowners and others wishing to carry out egg replacement on their own property • Extension of the red roof trial. <p>Officers will be happy to meet with the owner of Malvern Gate if they were to address these or any other concerns to Council officers.</p> |
| Supplementary Question: | <p>Thank you, my question was actually about what's got worse in the last 12 months, despite than these myriad initiatives which aren't going anywhere. Isn't it the case that we need to consider all options to deal with this mess and not rule anything out, except of course an education programme for gulls, which I expect officers to come up with? Therefore, will he take an imaginative approach and have the courtesy to reply that those organisations that have taken the time and trouble to contact this Council with helpful, constructive and practical ways of solving this problem and not ignoring them?</p> |
| Answer: | <p>Thank you for the supplementary, and of course it is true that under Labour gulls have got worse. For the benefit of Councillor Amos, that was irony.</p> <p>You may or not be aware that officers of the Council have met with pest control companies to discuss the potential for flying hawks or falcons to deter nesting, and there have been discussion with contractors previous, current and proposed over measures that the Council is taking. It's been advised however that flying raptors would not be cost effective and would actually cost over the amount of money that's currently in the budget.</p> <p>We've had conversations about culling in the past, and we know that's not appropriate or legal. I would suggest that perhaps Members will recall the Councillor making some accurate complaints - meaningful and reasonable complaints - about the development of gulls in the Warndon area only a few years ago. It's quite interesting to see that that's now moved over to Bedwardine, and I'm beginning to see the Councillor as a sort of pied piper, and I wonder if he could be encouraged to leave the city altogether and take the gulls with him?</p> |

91 **Notice of Motion**

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion, which had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8:

Litter Clearance of the A449

"The build up of litter on the A449 dual carriageway is a detriment to the city for both residents and visitors and is harmful to the environment.

This Council agrees that ensuring arterial routes into the city are litter free is essential for promoting a positive image of the city to visitors, protecting the environment and making our city a better place to live for our residents.

Council officers are requested to investigate low cost innovative solutions for the removal of litter from dual carriageways and to present costed proposals for more frequent litter clearances of the A449. Officers are to provide a report with costed proposals at the first meeting of the Environment Committee for further consideration."

Proposed By: Councillor Stafford

The proposer, Councillor Stafford and the seconder, Councillor Knight, spoke in support of the Motion.

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rule 11.8 set out in the Constitution, an amendment was proposed by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Berry which amended the original motion by the insertion of the words "and safe" after the word "innovative."

The proposer of the motion, Councillor Stafford confirmed that he accepted the amendment to the Motion.

Members then entered into a debate on the proposed Motion, as amended. On being put to the vote, the Motion was unanimously agreed and it was

RESOLVED: That the Council request Officers to investigate low cost innovative and safe solutions for the removal of litter from dual carriageways and to present costed proposals for more frequent litter clearances of the A449. Officers are to provide a report with costed proposals at the first meeting of the Environment Committee for further consideration.

92 Appointment to the Post of Managing Director

David Blake, Head of Paid Service and Corporate Director - Place left the room for consideration of this item.

The Leader of the Council reported that the Personnel and General Purposes Committee had conducted a recruitment process for a new Managing Director and had agreed that David Blake most closely matched the Council's requirements and could be expected to make an effective Managing Director.

In accordance with the Employment Procedure Rules of the Constitution, the Leader had notified the Monitoring Officer that Members of the Cabinet have no objection to this appointment.

It was proposed by Councillor Gregson, seconded by Councillor Bayliss and on being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council approve the appointment of David Blake as Managing Director.

93 Report from the Leader of the Council, Chairman of Relevant Committee or Committee Member on Matters which are Referred to Council for Decision

Procurement Procedures

The Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee reported that at the meeting on 16th March 2017, the Committee reviewed the procedures that the Council has in place for carrying out procurement. The Committee considered an updated Procurement Code. The Code formed part of the Council's adopted Constitution and any amendment to the Constitution was a decision for full Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Amos, seconded by Councillor G. Squires and on being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council adopts a revised Procurement Code.

Perdiswell Golf Course

The Leader reported that the Cabinet on 21st March 2017 endorsed proposals for the provision of golf at Perdiswell. In accordance with the decision of Full Council on 22nd November 2016, any proposal to sell, lease, transfer or otherwise dispose of land at Perdiswell should be determined by Full Council rather than under officer delegation or by Cabinet.

It was proposed by Councillor Gregson, seconded by Councillor Cawthorne and on being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council agree a long lease to the operator of the Ravenmeadow Golf Centre in respect of part of the golf course at Perdiswell.

New Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Heritage reported that the Cabinet on 21st March 2017 had noted the new Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan, an overarching partnership document setting the strategic direction for housing. If approved, the Plan would take effect from 1st April 2017, replacing the housing and homelessness strategies in their current format. The Worcestershire Housing Strategy formed part of the Policy Framework. In accordance with Article 4 of the Constitution, approving or adopting the policy framework was a function of the Full Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Berry, seconded by Councillor Gregson and on being put to the vote it was unanimously agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council agree the new Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan.

Pension Forward Funding

The Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources reported that the Cabinet on 21st March 2017 considered a proposal to make savings through the advance payment of forward-funding pension costs. The proposal was an amendment to the Budget as agreed by Council in February 2017 and therefore a decision for full Council.

It was proposed by Councillor J. Squires, seconded by Councillor Williams and on being put to the vote it was agreed and

RESOLVED: That the Council approve the advance payment of three years forward funding pension costs, estimated to be £2.4m, for a discount of approximately £150k.

94 Report from the Leader of the Council of Decisions Taken by Cabinet

The Council received and noted reports on decisions taken by the Cabinet at its meetings on 13th December 2016, 17th January 2017, 14th February 2017 and 21st March 2017. The Leader answered questions from Members.

In response to a question about Refurbishment of the Cinderella Sports Ground, specifically whether the ground will be open to the public, the Leader stated that he would provide a written reply.

95 Report from the Leader of the Council on any matters which he is of the opinion require urgent consideration by The Council

None.

96 Reports from Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee provided the Council with a summary of items that had been considered at the meetings of 30th November 2016, 4th January 2017, 1st February 2017 and 8th March 2017.

The Chairman of the Performance Management & Budget Scrutiny provided the Council with a summary of items that had been considered at the meetings 12th December 2016, 16th January 2017, 23rd January 2017 and 7th February 2017. The Vice-Chairman summarised items that had been considered at the meeting on 20th March 2017.

97 Items Involving the Disclosure of Exempt Information

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.

98 Questions

The Leader answered a question submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9. The matter was dealt with as an exempt item as it contained information relating to former employees of the Council.

99 Report from the Leader of the Council, Chairman of Relevant Committee or Committee Member on Exempt Matters which are Referred to Council for Decision

The Council noted the draft Heads of Terms in respect of Perdiswell Golf Course.

100 Report from the Leader of the Council of Exempt Decisions Taken by Cabinet

The Council received and noted a report on exempt decisions taken by the Cabinet at its meetings on 17th January and 21st March 2017. The Leader responded to questions arising therefrom.

Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 9.15p.m.

Chairman at the meeting on
16th May 2017

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