

Crawley Borough Council

Minutes of Full Council

Wednesday, 26 February 2020 at 7.30 pm

Councillors Present:

R Sharma (Mayor)

S Malik (Deputy Mayor)

M L Ayling, A Belben, T G Belben, B J Burgess, R G Burgess, R D Burrett, D Crow, C R Eade, R S Fiveash, M Flack, F Guidera, J Hart, I T Irvine, K L Jaggard, G S Jhans, M G Jones, P K Lamb, R A Lanzer, T Lunnon, T McAleney, K McCarthy, J Millar-Smith, C J Mullins, M Mwagale, D M Peck, A Pendlington, J Purdy, T Rana, B A Smith, P C Smith and K Sudan

Also in Attendance:

Mr Peter Nicolson

Appointed Independent Person

Officers Present:

Natalie Brahma-Pearl

Chief Executive

Ann-Maria Brown

Head of Legal, Democracy and HR

Ian Duke

Deputy Chief Executive

Chris Pedlow

Democratic Services Manager

Karen Hayes

Head of Corporate Finance

Patricia Salami

Station Programme Manager

Clem Smith

Head of Economy and Planning

Mez Matthews

Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor M W Pickett

Absent:

Councillor L M Ascough

1. Minute Silence and Tributes to Former Mayor and Leader of the Council Dr Howard Bloom

The Full Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Dr Howard Bloom, a former Mayor and Leader of the Council who had sadly and suddenly passed away.

The Mayor then invited representatives from each party to pay tribute to Dr Bloom. Councillors Crow, B. Smith, Lanzer, Lamb, Burrett, Mullins and the Mayor on behalf of the Council paid their respects with heartfelt and touching tributes.

2. Disclosures of Interest

The disclosures of interests made by Councillors are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

3. Items for debate (Reserved Items)

Councillors indicated that they wished to speak on a number of items as set out in the following table:

Page no.	Committee/ Minute no. <i>(and the Member reserving the item for Debate)</i>	Subject <i>(Decisions previously taken under delegated powers, reserved for debate only).</i>	Subject <i>(Recommendation to Full Council, reserved for debate)</i>
p.40	Governance Committee, 29 January 2020 (Minute 4) Labour and Conservative Groups		Adoption of the New Constitution – (Recommendation 2)
p.50	Cabinet 5 February 2020, (Minute 6) Labour and Conservative Groups		2020/21 Budget and Council Tax (Recommendation 3)
p.52	Cabinet 5 February 2020, (Minute 6) Conservative Group		Treasury Management Strategy 2020/2021 (Recommendation 4)
p.58	Planning Committee 10 February 2020. (Minute 6) Conservative Group	Planning Application CR/2019/0802/FUL - Bloc Hotel, South Terminal, Perimeter Road East, Gatwick, Crawley.	
p.61	Full Council Agenda		Notice of Precept (Recommendation 5)

4. **2020/21 Budget and Council Tax - Cabinet - 5 February 2020 (Recommendation 3)**

The Leader of the Council presented report [FIN/491](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance which set out the Budget and level of Council Tax for the year 2020/21. It was noted that the report detailed each of the Revenue, Capital and Housing Revenue Accounts that combine together to formulate 'The Budget'. In proposing the level of Council Tax for the Financial Year 2020/21, each of those accounts identified had been considered. The proposed Council Tax for 2020/21 was to be increased by 2.43%. It was noted that the report had been considered by the Cabinet on 5 February 2020 and by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 3 February 2020. In presenting The Budget to the Council, Councillor Lamb also confirmed that he was happy to accept the [Conservative Amendment](#) to the proposal (Recommendation 3), which was detailed in item 16 of the Supplemental Agenda, and as such it would be included as a part of the proposed substantive Budget before the Council. The Budget report, with the inclusion of the amendment, was seconded by Councillor P. Smith.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Duncan Crow addressed the meeting and made his budget speech which included thanking Councillor Lamb for accepting the Conservative Amendment to the Budget. The Mayor then opened up the general debate on the proposed Budget report as amended to the Council. Councillors Guidera, Lanzer, Irvine, Burrett, Mullins, Lunnon, Sudan and Jhans spoke during the debate with Councillor Lamb then using his right to reply.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Councillors expressed their thanks and appreciation for the work carried out by Karen Hayes (Head of Corporate Finance), the Finance Division generally and the Budget Advisory Group (BAG).

The Full Council was reminded that regulations required all Councils at their annual budget meetings to adopt the practice of recorded votes - that is, recording in the minutes of the meeting how each member present voted on any decision relating to the Annual Budget and Council Tax. This applied not only to substantive budget motions to agree the Budget and setting Council Taxes, including precepts, but also on any amendments proposed.

Following the conclusion of the debate, the Mayor invited the Head of Legal, Democracy and HR to commence the recorded voting process on the 2020/21 Budget and Council Tax as amended. The names of the Councillors voting for and against Recommendation 3 were recorded as set out below:

Voting in Favour: Councillors: Ayling, A Belben, T Belben, B Burgess, R Burgess, Burrett, Crow, Eade, Fiveash, Flack, Guidera, Hart, Irvine, Jaggard, Jhans, Jones, Lamb, Lanzer, Lunnon, Malik, McAleney, McCarthy, Millar-Smith, Mullins, Mwagale, Peck, Pendlington, Purdy, Rana, Sharma, B Smith, P Smith and Sudan. (33)

Voting Against: Councillors: None (0)

Abstentions: Councillors: None (0)

The Mayor declared the recommendation was carried – votes in favour 33, and votes against 0 with 0 abstention.

RESOLVED

That the Full Council approves the following items regarding the 2020/21 Budget:

- a) the proposed 2020/21 General Fund Budget including savings and growth as set out in section 6 and Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report [FIN/491](#), with the allocation of £49,000 for the proposed permanent Income Generation Officer position, to be amended to be either a one year fixed-term position or a one-off hiring of consultants for this purpose
- b) the proposed 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Budget as set out in section 10 and Appendix 3 of the report [FIN/491](#),
- c) the 2019/20 to 2022/23 Capital Programme and funding as set out in paragraph 11.5 of the report [FIN/491](#),
- d) that the Council's share of Council Tax for 2020/21 be increased by 2.43% from £203.94 to £208.89 for a band D property as set out in paragraphs 5.5.1 and 13.3 of report [FIN/491](#),
- e) the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/2021 as outlined in paragraph 16.3 and Appendix 6 of the report [FIN/491](#),

5. Notice of Precept 2020/2021- (Recommendation 5)

Councillor Lamb presented and moved the report that set out the [Notice of Precept](#) from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex and West Sussex County Council, which combined with the previously agreed Crawley Borough Council precept to formulate the 2020/21 Council Tax Resolution for 2020/21.

The recommendation was seconded by Councillor P. Smith.

Following approval of the Council's Budget and Council Tax 2020/21 in Recommendation 3, and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, the names of the Councillors voting for and against Recommendation 5 were recorded as set out below:-

Voting in Favour: Councillors: Ayling, A Belben, T Belben, B Burgess, R Burgess, Burrett, Crow, Eade, Fiveash, Flack, Guidera, Hart, Irvine, Jaggard, Jhans, Jones, Lamb, Lanzer, Lunnon, Malik, McAleney, McCarthy, Millar-Smith, Mullins, Mwagale, Peck, Pendlington, Purdy, Rana, Sharma, B Smith, P Smith and Sudan. (33)

Voting Against: Councillors: None (0)

Abstentions: Councillors: None (0)

The Mayor declared the recommendation was carried – votes in favour 33, and votes against 0 with 0 abstentions.

RESOLVED

1. That it be noted that on 24 December 2019 the Leader of the Council under delegated powers calculated the Council Tax Base 2020/21 for the whole Council area as **35,811.9** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]; and

2. That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2020/21 is calculated at £7,480,748.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

(a)	£116,777,379	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
(b)	£109,296,631	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
(c)	£7,480,748	being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
(d)	£208.89	being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
(e)	£0	being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
(f)	£208.89	being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

4. That it be noted that the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.
5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2020/21 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

COUNCIL TAX SCHEDULE 2020/21

	CRAWLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL	WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL	POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR SUSSEX	TOTAL
BAND A	139.26	959.16	133.27	1,231.69
BAND B	162.47	1,119.02	155.49	1,436.98
BAND C	185.68	1,278.88	177.70	1,642.26
BAND D	208.89	1,438.74	199.91	1,847.54
BAND E	255.31	1,758.46	244.33	2,258.10
BAND F	301.73	2,078.18	288.76	2,668.67
BAND G	348.15	2,397.90	333.18	3,079.23
BAND H	417.78	2,877.48	399.82	3,695.08

6. That it be determined in accordance with Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992 that the Council 's basic amount of Council Tax for 2020/21 is NOT excessive in accordance with principles approved by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC of the Act.

6. Public Question Time

There were no questions from the public.

Councillor Lanzer left the Chamber in advance of the debate on the next two items. (Petitions – "No Right Turn - Three Bridges Station Objection" and Notice of Motion 1 – Three Bridges Station)

7. Petition - "No Right Turn - Three Bridges Station Objection"

The Full Council considered the e-petition which had been received by the Council's Petitions Officer. As the petition contained over 1000 valid signatures it was required to be debated by Full Council. The petition stated as follows "No Right Turn – Three Bridges Station Objection".

“We the undersigned Petition the council to commence a further consultation on this issue, including viable options for the retention of the right turn out of the station forecourt, and ensuring that the consultation period lasts for a sufficient period of time and is adequately publicised in order to ensure that all key stakeholders are able to participate fully.”

“We wish to register our concerns at the implications of the loss of the right turn out of Three Bridges Station proposed as part of the re-design proposals which have recently been the subject of consultation by Crawley Borough Council, due to the negative effects we believe this will have on local residents. We also wish to express our concern about the short timeframe in which the consultation took place, and the level of publicity afforded to ensuring that all interested parties were able to have their say effectively.”

As the Petition related to a responsibility of the Cabinet, the Cabinet was required to take the final decision. The Full Council was however required to consider the petition and decide whether or not to make recommendations to inform the decision of the Cabinet. In accordance with the Council's petition Scheme, the Full Council had a maximum of 30 minutes to consider the petition.

Janet Seymour, the Principal Petitioner, presented the petition to the Full Council (the presentation is attached as Appendix B to these minutes).

Councillor P Smith, as Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, addressed the meeting, thanking the Principal Petitioner for submitting the petition. Councillor P Smith then made the following points:

- As a long-term resident of northern Crawley he used Three Bridges Station on a frequent basis.
- The petition requested that viable options be considered which retained the right-hand turn. Although the project was being managed by Crawley Borough Council, highways were the responsibility of West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and as such that element of the development was not the responsibility of Crawley Borough Council and would be deferred to WSCC.
- Had it been feasible to incorporate a right-hand turn into the Scheme it would have been retained. Ultimately no right-hand turn had been incorporated into the design as its retention had not been deemed feasible.
- Three consultation exercises had already been undertaken in relation to the Scheme. As a result of those consultations adjustments had been made to the Scheme including a new access to the eastern platform of the station, and engaging a company to carry out traffic modelling to inform the design options.
- Further consultation would not add value.

Councillor P Smith then moved recommendation 2(b) which was seconded by Councillor Irvine. Recommendation 2(b) proposed that the petition be noted and that Cabinet be asked (at its meeting on 11 March 2020) to consider the contents of the petition.

A debate then took place, during which Councillor McCarthy moved recommendation 2(c) which was seconded by Councillor Burrett as they fully supported the petition and, as a Ward Councillors for Pound Hill North & Forge Wood, felt that they could not support the redevelopment as it stood. Recommendation 2(c) proposed that the petition be supported, and that Cabinet be asked (at its meeting on 11 March 2020) to commence a further consultation on the issue, including viable options for the retention of the right turn out of the station forecourt, and that it be ensured that the

consultation period lasted for a sufficient period of time and was adequately publicised in order to ensure that all the key stakeholders were able to participate fully.

During the debate Councillors A Belben, T Belben, Burrett and Purdy spoke on the issues and expressed views including:

- Engagement of stakeholder views had been lacking.
- The lack of feedback provided to residents had led to the large number of petition signatories.
- Due to the increase in distance vehicles would be required to travel as a result of the loss of the right-hand turn, vehicle emissions in the area would increase.
- The data obtained through the traffic modelling survey did not truly represent average traffic movements as it had been carried out during a period when there was reduced traffic movement (ie end of school year and school activities week).
- The loss of the right-hand turn would also affect those who travelled from outside the Borough to use the station. Those users, as they were not Crawley residents, had not been entitled to sign the petition.
- The loss of the right-hand turn would increase the use of the surrounding roads, including St Mary's Drive, where congestion was already an issue.
- Some information contained within the traffic modelling survey was incorrect (such as increased travel distance and time due to the re-routing as a result of the loss of the right-hand turn) which called into question the accuracy of other information within the survey.

Councillor Lamb, as Leader of the Council and as Chair of the Cabinet, then addressed the Full Council and made the following points:

- It had been demonstrated that there was high demand for bike racks at the station.
- The current right-hand turn delayed all traffic in the areas.
- The Cabinet would re-contact West Sussex County Council as Highways Authority to ascertain whether there was a remotely conceivable way in which a right-hand turn could be accommodated.
- It would only be possible for the Scheme to move forward if it was 'signed off' by West Sussex County Council as the Highways Authority.
- If the Scheme did not go ahead then any money allocated to the project would need to be returned and could not be spent.

As recommendation 2(b) ("that the petition be noted and that Cabinet be asked (at its meeting on 11 March 2020) to consider the contents of the petition") had been moved and seconded first during the debate it was then voted upon. The Mayor called for a recorded vote as Council Procedure Rule 18.5 required that all petitions considered by Full Council be subject to a recorded vote where the decision was not unanimous:

Voting in favour of Recommendation 2(b): *M Ayling, R Fiveash, M Flack, J Hart, I Irvine, G Jhans, M Jones, P Lamb, T Lunnnon, S Malik, T McAleney, C Mullins, T Rana, R Shama, B Smith, P Smith and K Sudan* (17)

Voting against recommendation 2(b): *A Belben, T Belben, B Burgess, R Burgess, R Burrett, D Crow, C Eade, F Guidera, K Jaggard, K McCarthy, J Millar-Smith, M Mwagale, D Peck, A Pendlington and J Purdy* (15).

Abstentions: *None* (0).

The Mayor declared that recommendation 2(b) had been carried – 17 votes in favour, and 15 votes against with no votes of abstentions.

RESOLVED

1. That the contents of the petition and the views expressed by the Principal Petitioner be received.
2. That the petition be noted and that Cabinet be asked (at its meeting on 11 March 2020) to consider the contents of the petition.

8. Notice of Motion 1- Three Bridges Station

The Council considered the Notice of Motion 1 'Three Bridges Station' as set out in the Full Council's agenda. The Motion was moved and presented by Councillor McCarthy and seconded and supported by Councillor Jaggard.

Councillor P. Smith moved and presented the [Labour amendment](#), (as shown in *Supplementary Agenda Order Paper*). The amendment was seconded and supported by Councillor Lamb.

During the lengthy and passionate debate both on the original Notice of Motion and the proposed amendment, Councillors T. Belben, Irvine, Burrett, Malik, Guidera, Lunnon, B Burgess, Pendlington and A Belben all spoke during the debate on the merit on the original Notice of Motion and the proposed Amendment before the Full Council.

9. Duration of the Meeting (Guillotine)

Councillor Lanzer returned to the Chamber for the vote on the use of Guillotine.

As the business had not been completed within the scheduled 2 hours 30 minutes a vote on continuation, and in line with Council Procedure Rule 2.2, was held. The Mayor required the Full Council to consider if it wished to continue with the meeting.

Having put it to the vote, the Full Council agreed that the meeting be continued for an additional period not exceeding 30 minutes.

Councillor Lanzer then left the Chamber in advance of the continuation of the debate on Notice of Motion 1 – Three Bridges Station.

10. Notice of Motion 1 - Three Bridges Station (Continued)

Following the resumption of the debate Councillor McCarthy used his right to reply to speak at the end of the debate.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the proposed Labour Amendment to the Motion, which was carried by 17 votes in Favour, 15 Against and 0 Abstentions

The Notice of Motion as amended was then agreed.

RESOLVED

“This Council recognises the importance of Three Bridges Station to the whole town, and welcomes the completion of the recent consultation on the forecourt development designs.

Whilst the Council supports the key principles of the scheme, and welcomes the many benefits this will bring for all users of the station complex, it also recognises the significant and widespread concerns expressed by a large number of respondents to the recent consultation exercise and by a much greater number of residents who participated in the recent e-petition, all of whom have very grave reservations about the loss of the right turn movement out of the station and the negative effects this will have for drivers leaving the station to travel to Pound Hill, Maidenbower, Worth, Forge Wood and villages to the east of the town, and on taxi drivers and their passengers, all of whom will suffer increased journey times as a result of not being able to turn right out of the station.

In the light of the significant public concern, the Council resolves to ask the Cabinet to request that West Sussex County Council provide an alternative scheme based on either a modified version of the previously considered Option 3 as detailed in the Traffic Modelling Summary dated January 2020, or on similar alternatives, to retain the right turn out of the station complex, and to carry out a further public consultation exercise on any new scheme the County Council produces on this basis.”

Councillor Lanzer returned to the Chamber at the conclusion of the debate.

11. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on [16 December 2019](#) approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

12. Minutes of the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Committees

Moved by Councillor Malik (as the Deputy Mayor):-

RESOLVED

That the following reports be received:

Planning Committee – 17 December 2019
Planning Committee – 14 January 2020
Cabinet – 15 January 2020
Licensing Committee – 20 January 2020
Governance Committee – 29 January 2020
Overview and Scrutiny Commission – 3 February 2020
Cabinet – 5 February 2020
Planning Committee – 10 February 2020

Moved by Councillor Malik (as the Deputy Mayor):-

That the recommendation contained in the reports on the following matters, which had not been reserved for debate, be adopted:-

Councillors' Allowances Independent Remuneration Panel 2020 – Governance Committee – 29 January 2020 (Recommendation 1)

The Full Council considered report [LDS/156](#) of the Head of Legal, Democracy and HR which previously been considered by the Governance Committee – 29 January 2020

RESOLVED

That Full Council approves the extension of the current Councillors' Allowances Scheme to encompass the 2020/21 financial year.

13. Adoption of the New Constitution - Governance Committee, 29 January 2020 (Recommendation 2)

The Full Council considered report [LDS/157](#) of the Head of Legal, Democracy and HR, which had previously been considered by the Governance Committee on 29 January 2020. The Chair of the Governance Committee presented the report, and in doing so moved the Recommendation, which detailed the proposed draft new Constitution of the Council and the process used to devise the new document. It was explained that the draft new Constitution had been written in association with, and unanimously endorsed by, the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG), based on the principles agreed by the Governance Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2017.

The aim of the Review had been to produce a Constitution which was more user friendly, fit for purpose and modern in structure, to enable users to take decisions and/or understand procedures and protocols in a manner that encouraged efficiency. The proposed Constitution was now 220 pages (it had been 496 pages at the start of the Review), and the new version was clearer and easier to both read and use. It was asked that thanks be recorded to Chris Pedlow (Democratic Services Manager) and Mez Matthews (Democratic Services Officer) for their hard work on the rewrite of the Constitution. Councillor Burrett, as the Vice Chair of Governance seconded the recommendation and the report also endorsing thanks to the officers.

Councillor Crow moved and presented the [Conservative amendment](#), (as shown in *Supplementary Agenda Order Paper*). The amendment was seconded and supported by Councillor Lanzer.

The Mayor then opened up the general debate on Recommendation 2 and the proposed Amendment. Councillor Jones spoke on item, which was followed by a Motion moved by Councillor Lamb and seconded by Councillor McAleney of '*putting the Recommendation/ Amendments to the vote*'. The Mayor called for a vote on the procedural motion which was carried by 18 Votes in Favour, 13 votes Against with 2 Abstentions.

The Mayor then held a vote on the Conservative Amendment, which fell by 16 votes For and 17 votes Against with 0 Abstention.

The Mayor then called for a vote on the substantive Recommendation 2 which was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED

That Full Council

- a) approves the new Constitution as set out [here](#), noting the trial element of Written Public Questions and extending the provision for Public Question Times.
- b) delegates that the Monitoring Officer bring the adoption of the new Constitution into effect as soon as practicable.

14. Treasury Management Strategy 2020/2021 - Cabinet -5 February 2020 - (Recommendation 4)

The Full Council considered report [FIN/493](#) of the Head of Corporate Finance, which had previously been considered by the Cabinet on 5 February 2020 and by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission on 3 February 2020. The Leader of the Council presented the report advising that the strategy covered two main areas: treasury management issues and capital related matters. It was highlighted that the Council had a statutory requirement to produce a Treasury Management Strategy.

Councillor Crow also spoke on the item and the recommendation.

Councillor Lamb moved the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor P. Smith.

The Mayor then called for a vote on Recommendation 4, which was carried by 17 votes in Favour, 0 Against and 15 Abstentions.

RESOLVED

That the Full Council approves:

- a) the Treasury Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement contained within Section 5 of report [FIN/493](#);
- b) the Treasury Management Strategy contained within Section 6 of report [FIN/493](#);
- c) the Investment Strategy contained within Section 7, and the detailed criteria included in Appendix 3 of report [FIN/493](#).

15. Duration of the Meeting (Guillotine)

As the business had not been completed within the additional period of 30 minutes after the vote on continuation, and in line with Council Procedure Rule 2.2, the Mayor required the Full Council to consider if it wished to continue with the meeting and having put it to the Full Council, the meeting was continued for an additional period not exceeding 30 minutes.

16. Planning Application CR/2019/0802/FUL - Bloc Hotel, South Terminal, Perimeter Road East, Gatwick, Crawley - Planning Committee - 10 February 2020.

Councillor Jaggard advised that her rationale for bringing the item forward was that she had been quite shocked that the application included hotel bedrooms without any window or access to natural light. She was also concerned that there was no Council policy objecting to hotels not having any window or access to natural light. Whilst she understood, by the nature of the hotel being at the airport terminals, that most users only stayed for one night, it was still felt that other premises might use the Bloc Hotel as a precedent and include hotels room without any window or access to natural light. She hoped that the Council could change its policies to ensure that loophole was not exploited.

Councillors Guidera, P. Smith and Sharma all spoke on the issue and supported the concerned raised.

Councillor Malik, as the Chair of the Planning Committee, ended the debate commenting that he also support a change in policy on the matter and stated that he would speak to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development over addressing the issue as a matter of urgency.

17. Communications

The Mayor reported that as 2019 had been the 550th anniversary of Sikhism's founder Guru Nanak he had attended a number of functions in relation to the celebration. He also drew the Full Council's attention to the significance of this anniversary given the recent appointment of the Council's first Sikh Cabinet Member. The Mayor had also hosted the Mayor's Christmas Ball where he had felt the absence of former Councillor, Leader and Mayor Dr Howard Bloom.

18. Councillors' Written Questions

Councillors' written questions, together with the answers, were published in advance of the start of the meeting with the Council's Supplementary Agenda under item 11

Questions were as follows:-

Questioner:	Councillor Lunnon
Addressed to:	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
Subject(s):	The modelling exercise used for considering options within regarding the potential for a right turn as part of the Three Bridges station

Questioner:	Councillor Burrett
Addressed to:	Leader of the Council
Subject(s):	Number of FTE's the Council employees and the number of staff disciplinary cases, and staff grievance cases dealt with by the Council

19. Announcements by Cabinet Members

Cabinet Member	Announcement
Councillor B Smith (Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement).	<i>I wanted to inform the Council that we are now receiving applications for grants from our voluntary organisations and they would be going through the Council in the normal way. I believe we should be grateful for the work of the voluntary organisations because without them this town would be a much poorer place. Charities provide many services to the town and its residents which the Borough or County Councils cannot provide, and many residents benefit greatly from the services provided by those charities. The Council will do its best to fulfil the requests of those charities who submit a grant application. I want to thank the charities for the work they do for us all.</i>

20. Questions to Cabinet Members

Name of Councillor asking Question	Name of Cabinet Member Responding
Councillor Guidera to the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing <i>You very generously and kindly visited Chichester Close Playground with Councillor Mwangale when she was newly elected back in October and it is worse now than it was then. We visited the playground and, I don't know why, but there is now fencing erected around the swings which are all wrapped up so now, what is left of the park is essentially a really knackered old roundabout, the larger slide and then the older slide (which is for the toddlers) which I don't believe is fit for purpose and I don't think any toddler should be playing on it. The other thing is the wooden fencing is half missing around the corner so all that money spent on the path and gate, which I assume was to prevent dogs running into the park, doesn't have any effect as it is now wide open to any</i>	Councillor Mullins (Cabinet Member for Wellbeing) <i>I have been discussing this very recently and we do see how important the state of Chichester Close Play Area is. It has been moved right up the list in priority and it will get done as soon as possible. We are about to constitute a small working party (cross-benches) to re-assess the unsupervised play areas because the original list we had is now somewhat out of date and we are getting further reports in about the deterioration of some of the older ones. Obviously we should be proud of the ones we have refurbished, but some of the older ones are in a state now and we are doing a reassessment. I can assure you and Councillor Mwangale that I was quite shocked at the condition of the Chichester Close one and I will make</i>

<p><i>stray dogs (and in fact there is a stray dog that runs around that field which is regularly reported on). Do you have any idea of how quickly we can expect some kind of changes to the situation?</i></p>	<p><i>sure that it gets an early priority. It is not possible to give a timescale but we will get a working party together and, if you wanted to put yourself forward for it, you will be able to discuss the details there.</i></p>
<p>Councillor Eade to the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing</p> <p><i>A few years ago I met with you, officers and teenage skaters at Southgate Park where we discussed an extension for the learners and less skilled skaters to use. Has there been any progress on that?</i></p>	<p>Councillor Mullins (Cabinet Member for Wellbeing)</p> <p><i>Now you have raised it with me I will raise it at my Portfolio Briefing this Friday and see where we are with it. I can't answer the question tonight, but I will look into it.</i></p>
<p>Councillor Crow to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement</p> <p><i>In just over two months' time in early May we have a very special date which is Friday 8 May which is the 75th anniversary of VE day and the Government have designated that day to be a Bank Holiday. Does the Council have any plans to commemorate, or know of any events taking place in the town because, quite sadly, this will probably be the last major anniversary of VE Day where we will have the veterans, and others who were adults at that time, who will remember it and so it quite a significant event. If you could update us in any way I would really welcome that.</i></p>	<p>Councillor B Smith (Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement)</p> <p><i>This has come to my attention due to my involvement in an organisation I belong to. I also understand from the Leader that he has already raised this with the Communications Team and they are looking at what we are going to do. I agree with Councillor Crow that this is a very important date and it is something that we should acknowledge and promote. I will certainly look at encouraging the Council. We have in the past done some work with the Army Ground in Kilnmead Road and I think we should do the same again. We will look at that and bring some suggestions to the Council. If you have any suggestions I would be pleased to have them.</i></p>
<p>Councillor B Burgess to the Cabinet Member for Wellbeing</p> <p><i>What were the reasons we lost our Green Flag in the Memorial Gardens and what is proposed in order to gain the award?</i></p>	<p>Councillor Mullins (Cabinet Member for Wellbeing)</p> <p><i>We have consistently got the Green Flag for the park so we will probably look at that again. This is another one I will raise at my Portfolio Briefing to see where we are going with it and I will come back to you.</i></p>

<p>Councillor T Belben to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability</p> <p><i>What is the Council's strategy to accommodate the need for more electric charging points in the town?</i></p>	<p>Councillor G Jhans (Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability)</p> <p><i>Thank you for that question. We have our draft Transport Strategy out for consultation at the moment and there are a number of recommendations and plans for car sharing and also for electric vehicle charging points so that is a point to look into. I will also talk to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development to see what else we could potentially do in the future.</i></p>
<p>Councillor Hart to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement</p> <p><i>Carrying on from Councillor Crow's question relating to commemorations for VE Day in May, is the Council planning on doing anything to commemorate VJ Day (Victory in Japan) on 15 August as some people would class that as the end of the War?</i></p>	<p>Councillor B Smith (Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Community Engagement)</p> <p><i>It is not something we have been looking at and have discussed, but I am happy to take it forward and I will talk to the Communications Team about it. We will look at both. Thank you.</i></p>

21. Questions to Committee Chairs

Name of Councillor asking Question	Name of Committee Chair Responding
<p>Councillor Lanzer to the Chair of the Planning Committee</p> <p><i>There was recently a planning application at Steers Lane for 185 new homes which has been granted on appeal. How did it get into the appeal process? I understand it was because we ran out of time to make the determination ourselves, if that is the case, why did that happen?</i></p>	<p>Councillor Malik – (Chair of the Planning Committee).</p> <p><i>Just to confirm that I am replying, not as the Deputy Mayor but as the Chair of the Planning Committee. I cannot recall the application you are referring to, but I will find out about it and get back to you.</i></p>

Closure of Meeting

With the business of the Full Council concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 10.57 pm

**R Sharma
(Mayor)**