

MINUTES OF COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

At a Meeting of the Council for the Borough of Slough held at the Council Chamber - Observatory House, 25 Windsor Road, SL1 2EL on Thursday, 26th September, 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present:- The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Dhillon), in the chair; Councillors Abbasi, E. Ahmed, I. Ahmed, Ajaib, Akram (until 9.05pm), Anderson, Bedi, Dar (until 9.05pm), Dauti, Gahir, Gill, Hulme, Iftakhar (until 8.07pm), Kelly, Khawar, Manku, Mann, Matloob, Mohindra, Muvvala, Nazir (until 8.17pm), Naveed, O'Kelly, Parmar, Rana, J. Sabah (until 9.05pm), W. Sabah (until 9.05pm), Satti, Shah, Shaik, Smith, Stedmond, Tomar, Wright and Zarait

Apologies for Absence:- Councillors Carter, Chahal, Escott, Instone, Mohammad and Qaseem

22. Declarations of Interest

Agenda Item 4 - Petition Save The Curve. Councillor Dhillon declared that he had publicly offered his opinion with regards to the future of the Curve. Councillor Dhillon left the meeting during consideration of this item.

23. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Council held on 25th July 2024

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th July 2024 be approved as a correct record.

24. To receive the Mayor's Communications.

The Mayor welcomed Colin Sweeney to the meeting, who had recently joined the council as the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager.

25. Petition - Save The Curve

The Mayor left the meeting prior to consideration of this agenda item.

(The Deputy Mayor in the Chair)

The Deputy Mayor invited Mr Moloney to address the meeting.

Following completion of the subsequent debate,

It was moved by Councillor Smith,
Seconded by Councillor Shaik,

- a) "That Council note that no decision has been made to close the Curve and any such decision would be an executive decision reserved to Cabinet;

Council - 26.09.24

- b) That Council recommend to Cabinet that an options appraisal is undertaken as part of the wider property asset review process and any recommendations be presented to Cabinet.”

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed with 21 votes for and 14 abstentions.

Resolved -

- c) That Council note that no decision has been made to close the Curve and any such decision would be an executive decision reserved to Cabinet;
- d) That Council recommend to Cabinet that an options appraisal is undertaken as part of the wider property asset review process and any recommendations be presented to Cabinet.

(The Mayor returned to the meeting)

26. Questions from Electors under Procedure Rule 9.

Two questions were received. One elector was present and asked a supplementary question. A written reply to the questions would be sent to the electors.

27. Recommendation of the Employment Committee from its meeting held on 19th September 2024

It was moved by Councillor Satti,
Seconded by Councillor Rana,

“That the redundancy package for the post holder in the Group Manager Building Manager role be approved.”

The recommendation was put to the vote and agreed with 28 votes for and 7 abstentions.

Resolved – That the redundancy package for the post holder in the Group Manager Building Manager role be approved.

28. Changes to the Council's Constitution - Contract Procedure Rules and General Status Update

It was moved by Councillor Smith,
Seconded by Councillor Stedmond,

- a) “That the proposed new Part 4.6.1 – Contract Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix A - be approved for inclusion in the constitution to take effect from the 28 October 2024 or such other date as agreed by the Monitoring Officer to take account of any change to the commencement of the Procurement Act 2023.
- b) That the status update on the Constitution be noted, with agreement to minor amendment as set out in the report.”

Council - 26.09.24

The recommendations were put to the vote and agreed with 35 votes for and 1 abstention.

Resolved -

- a) That the proposed new Part 4.6.1 – Contract Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix A - be approved for inclusion in the constitution to take effect from the 28 October 2024 or such other date as agreed by the Monitoring Officer to take account of any change to the commencement of the Procurement Act 2023.
- b) That the status update on the Constitution be noted, with agreement to minor amendment as set out in the report.

29. To consider Motions submitted under procedure Rule 14.

A) Winter Fuel Allowance

It was moved by Councillor O’Kelly,
Seconded by Councillor Smith,

“Council resolves that:

- The Chief Executive be instructed to write, on behalf of Slough Borough Council, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and for the introduction of a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments.
- The Chief Executive be instructed to write, on behalf of Slough Borough Council, to all MPs covering Berkshire, asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.
- All group leaders within Slough Borough Council be invited to sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be suspended and reviewed.
- The Council raise awareness, via social media, council noticeboards, promotion in local press and if possible, give consideration to targeted letters to those who may be eligible, to maximise uptake of pension credits.”

Councillor Mann moved, as an amendment,
Seconded by Councillor Hulme,

“Council resolves that:

- The Chief Executive be instructed to write, on behalf of Slough Borough Council, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling for the ~~policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and for the introduction~~ **consideration** of a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments.
- The Chief Executive be instructed to write, on behalf of Slough Borough Council, to ~~all MPs covering Berkshire,~~ **the two MP’s representing Slough,** asking them to give their formal support to ~~halting the changes to the~~ **introduction of a new threshold** for Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.

Council - 26.09.24

- ~~All group leaders within Slough Borough Council be invited to sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be suspended and reviewed.~~
- The Council **support the Labour Group campaign to** raise awareness, via social media, council noticeboards, promotion in local press and if possible, give consideration to targeted letters to those who may be eligible, to maximise uptake of pension credits.”

The amendment was put to the vote and lost with 7 votes for, 26 against and 1 abstention.

The original motion was put to the vote and agreed with 26 votes for and 8 abstentions.

Resolved -

- The Chief Executive be instructed to write, on behalf of Slough Borough Council, to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and for the introduction of a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments.
- The Chief Executive be instructed to write, on behalf of Slough Borough Council, to all MPs covering Berkshire, asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.
- All group leaders within Slough Borough Council be invited to sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be suspended and reviewed.
- The Council raise awareness, via social media, council noticeboards, promotion in local press and if possible, give consideration to targeted letters to those who may be eligible, to maximise uptake of pension credits.

B) Impact of Gambling within the Borough

It was moved by Councillor Tomar,
Seconded by Councillor Dauti,

“Slough Borough Council acknowledges:

- a) The increasing concern regarding the adverse effects of gambling on families and communities, the rising number of gambling establishments in the town, the upsurge in gambling advertising since the implementation of the Gambling Act in 2005, and the growth of online gambling.
- b) The potential impact of gambling on the demand for council services, including those for children, families, adults, treatment, early intervention, homelessness, and housing.

As such, the Council resolves to:

- a) Review licensing policies for gambling businesses to consider the above concerns, conduct regular compliance visits, and map specific gambling-related risks to assist in council-level decision-making.

Council - 26.09.24

- b) Provide training for staff to address gambling-related harms, work in collaboration with local partners to establish referral pathways, and gather data to comprehend the extent of detrimental gambling and its consequences.”

The motion was put to the vote and agreed with 33 votes for and 1 abstention.

Resolved -

Slough Borough Council acknowledges:

- a) The increasing concern regarding the adverse effects of gambling on families and communities, the rising number of gambling establishments in the town, the upsurge in gambling advertising since the implementation of the Gambling Act in 2005, and the growth of online gambling.
- b) The potential impact of gambling on the demand for council services, including those for children, families, adults, treatment, early intervention, homelessness, and housing.

As such, the Council resolves to:

- a) Review licensing policies for gambling businesses to consider the above concerns, conduct regular compliance visits, and map specific gambling-related risks to assist in council-level decision-making.
- b) Provide training for staff to address gambling-related harms, work in collaboration with local partners to establish referral pathways, and gather data to comprehend the extent of detrimental gambling and its consequences.

C) Cleanliness in Slough

It was moved by Councillor Mann,
Seconded by Councillor Hulme,

“The Council notes;

- a) Residents value, and deserve, a clean and attractive local environment.
- b) The correlation between neglected and dirty streets and higher levels of crime and resident’s perception of safety and pride in our local environment.
- c) Our council staff do their best, under very difficult circumstances, but the service is failing and residents have lost confidence. We are seeing increasing complaints to councillors, dirty and overflowing bins, increasingly smells across the town, an increase in fly-tipping and a collapse of the street cleaning routine across the town. The Conservative administration’s claim their £71,000 cut to street cleaning this year would not result in a reduction in service is demonstrably untrue.
- d) The performance metrics for the service are woeful; with the number of ASB and environmental services requests being resolved within 90 days currently 260% over target and missed bin collection rates also above target levels.

Council - 26.09.24

The Council resolves to;

- a) Instruct the lead member for environmental services to provide a written update to all members on the supposed positive impact of his 'environmental hit squads'.
- b) Resist any reduction in staff headcount in the service, as a lack of staff has contributed to the current failures.
- c) Undertaken a bin audit across the borough, reporting back to members within 3 months, identifying hotspots of litter, need for additional bins and mapping of bins across the borough.
- d) Initiate a street cleaning taskforce, with members and councillors, to review and refine the schedule of street cleaning across the borough.
- e) Instruct the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise, amongst other issues, the performance of the service, current policies of street cleaning, vegetation clearing and enforcement, adherence to response rates and make recommendations."

The motion was put to the vote and a prior request having been made for the record of the voting –

There voted for the motion:

Councillors Ajaib, Anderson, Gahir, Gill, Hulme, Mann, Matloob and Parmar.. 8

There voted against the motion:

Councillors Abbasi, E.Ahmed, I.Ahmed, Bedi, Dauti, Kelly, Khawar, Manku, Mohindra, Muvvala, Naveed, O'Kelly, Rana, Satti, Shah, Shaik, Smith, Stedmond, Tomar, Wright and Zarait 21

There abstained from voting:

Councillor Dhillon (The Worshipful The Mayor) 1

The motion was not carried.

30. To note Questions from Members under Procedure Rule 10

Details of Member questions and replies received were noted as published in the supplementary agenda.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 7.00 pm and closed at 9.41 pm)