
West Sussex County Council – Ordinary Meeting

19 July 2019

At the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held at 10.30 am on Friday, 19 July 2019, at the County Hall, Chichester, the members present being:

Mrs Duncton (Chairman)

Mr Acraman	Mrs Kitchen
Lt Cdr Atkins, RD	Mr Lanzer
Mr Barling	Mr Lea
Mr Barrett-Miles	Ms Lord
Lt Col Barton, TD	Mr Markwell
Mrs Bennett	Mr Marshall
Mr Boram	Mr McDonald
Mr Bradford	Mrs Millson
Mrs Bridges	Mr Montyn
Mr Burrett	Mr R J Oakley
Mr Catchpole	Mr S J Oakley
Mr Cloake	Dr O'Kelly
Mr Crow	Mr Oxlade
Mrs Dennis	Mr Parikh
Dr Dennis	Mr Patel
Mr Edwards	Mrs Pendleton
Mr Elkins	Mr Purchase
Ms Flynn	Mrs Purnell
Ms Goldsmith	Mrs Russell
Mrs Hall	Mr Simmons
Mr High	Mr Smytherman
Mr Hunt	Mr Turner
Mrs Jones, MBE	Mrs Urquhart
Mr Jones	Mr Waight
Mrs Jupp	Dr Walsh, KStJ, RD
Mr Jupp	Mr Whittington
Ms Kennard	Mr Wickremaratchi

28 Death of Mr Charles Petts

28.1 The Chairman reported the death of a current member of the Council, Mr Charles Petts, who had been the member for the Three Bridges division since 2017.

28.2 Members stood for a minute's silence.

29 Interim Executive Director Resource Services

29.1 The Chairman welcomed Richard Ennis to his first meeting as Interim Executive Director Resource Services.

30 Apologies for Absence

- 30.1 Apologies were received from Mrs Arculus, Mr Baldwin, Mr Barnard, Mr Bradbury, Mrs Brunson, Mr Fitzjohn, Mr Hillier, Mr Mitchell, Mr Oppler, Mr Quinn and Mrs Sparkes.
- 30.2 Mr Buckland, Mrs Smith and Ms Sudan were absent.
- 30.3 Apologies for the morning session were received from Dr Dennis and for the afternoon session from Lt Cdr Atkins, Mr Barling and Lt Col Barton. Ms Lord gave her apologies and arrived at 11.35 a.m. She also gave her apologies for the afternoon session.
- 30.4 Mrs Bridges and Mr Purchase were absent for the afternoon session. Mr Cloake, Ms Flynn and Mrs Hall left at 3.45 p.m.

31 Members' Interests

- 31.1 Members declared interests as set out at Appendix 1.

32 Minutes

- 32.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held on 7 June 2019 (pages 9 to 38) be approved as a correct record.

33 Review of Proportionality

- 33.1 The County Council was reminded of its statutory duty following recent changes in group affiliation to review the proportionality on its committees. A report on the application of the proportionality rules and how they were applied was set out at pages 39 and 40 and a table showing the resulting number of seats on committees had been circulated.
- 33.2 Resolved –
That the review of proportionality on committees be agreed.

34 Appointments

- 34.1 The Council approved appointments as set out below.

Committee	Change
Children and Young People's Services Select Committee	Mr Jupp in place of Mrs Russell Mr Jupp as Vice-Chairman Mr Lea to fill vacancy

Committee	Change
Performance and Finance Select Committee	Mr Hillier to fill vacancy
Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee	Mr Jones to fill vacancy
Rights of Way Committee	Mr Lea and Mr Buckland to replace Dr O'Kelly and Mr Quinn Mrs Brunsdon to fill substitute vacancy
Standards Committee	Mrs Brunsdon to fill vacancy
Corporate Parenting Panel	Mrs Millson as Vice-Chairman

35 Address by a Cabinet Member

- 35.1 Members received an address by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People on the Council's improvement plan in relation to the actions and proposals to address the requirements arising from the recent Ofsted report into Children's Services. A report by the Cabinet Member had been circulated.

36 Motion on Small Schools Federations

- 36.1 The following motion was moved by Dr O'Kelly and seconded by Mr Smytherman:

'The current financial climate for small schools continues to be challenging. The government strategy for small schools is to aim to keep them open and includes exploring federation before considering closure. This Council itself recognises the need for small schools to consider federation in its School Effectiveness Strategy 2018-22. Closure of a small school can be devastating for children, families and the rural communities they are in and the School Effectiveness Strategy recognises this as only a final option.

The process of federation relies on school governors, who are volunteers, often with full time jobs and other commitments, and who do not always have the time and skill sets needed, to explore and develop the federation options fully themselves. Although the School Effectiveness Strategy outlines that the Council will support and challenge governing bodies who have considered the options, there is no formal process for assisting governing bodies in assessing the options open to them and developing possible federation agreements in the first place.

This Council believes that:

-
- (a) Small schools are at the heart of our smaller communities.
 - (b) The federation process is not always straightforward and without significant input from this Council from the earliest stages of the process, governing bodies cannot easily explore federation on their own.
 - (c) A more proactive approach to federation is more likely to keep our small schools open and viable and at the heart of our rural communities.
 - (d) Consulting on the possible closure of a school should only be considered where all other options have been exhausted.

This Council resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to:

- (1) Share knowledge about federation and how it can be achieved with all small schools including sharing best practice guidance from other local authorities;
- (2) Provide officer support to governing bodies to consider federation including providing support to find possible partners and facilitate discussions;
- (3) Provide practical tools and officer support during the partnership phase in helping to make all the transitional arrangements; and
- (4) Not consult with the public as to the future of any school in West Sussex without having gone through such a process with schools.'

36.2 The motion was referred to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for consideration.

37 Motion on system of Council governance

37.1 The following motion was moved by Dr Walsh and seconded by Mrs Millson:

'The County Council has been found 'inadequate' by HM Inspectorate, in respect of the Fire and Rescue Service, as well as in its provision of Children's Services by Ofsted, where the Government has appointed a Commissioner to run the service. The Member of Parliament for Mid Sussex has written to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government expressing his "grave concerns about the governance of this authority", and asking him "to investigate why things have gone so wrong".

It is abundantly clear to all that there is a systemic failure of political leadership of West Sussex County Council encompassing all our major services, and further evidenced by the high turnover rate

of most senior officers at Director level including Chief Executive over the last few years, and the churn of Cabinet Members.

The Council therefore resolves to scrap the current Cabinet system of governance, where most major decisions are taken either by individual Cabinet Members, or occasionally by the whole Cabinet, and to replace it with a Committee-based system, where all councillors play a part in decision making, and for this to be in place by May 2020.'

- 37.2 The motion was referred to the Governance Committee for consideration.

38 Motion on Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Rating

- 38.1 The following motion was moved by Mr Jones and seconded by Mr Purchase.

'This Council notes with dismay the findings of the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection report on the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) with a rating of 'needs improvement' for Efficiency, a rating of 'needs improvement' for Effectiveness and a rating of 'inadequate' for People. It is also the only service in the country not to get a 'good' rating in any category.

This Council recognises that staff in WSFRS do an excellent job in protecting people in West Sussex but that they have been let down by a failure of political leadership at the County Council, which has allowed cost-cutting and budget pressures to take priority over the maintenance of what HMICFS considers acceptable standards.

This has been exacerbated by decisions from the Cabinet that have seen fire stations closed, and second and third fire engines being removed from some remaining stations. Reports from the former Chief Fire Officer confirm they were major reasons for increased response times. Despite the Council's extended response standard for most of the county of 14 minutes, the service has been unable to meet it, as the inspectorate notes, since 2014.

This Council also recognises that this is the second inspection in recent months that has seen a vital service, important to the welfare and safety of all West Sussex residents, being judged as insufficient to meet the required standard and it has become unsustainable for this council to have confidence in a Leader and Cabinet who have presided over such an outcome. This Council therefore expresses that it has no confidence in the Leader and Cabinet.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities (or their successors, if and when they are appointed) to:

-
- (1) Completely withdraw the cuts to WSFRS proposed for 2019/20 that were put on hold for one year and prioritise the recruitment of additional firefighters to replace those cut since 2010.
 - (2) Stop prevaricating on the clearly unfair funding that WSFRS is receiving compared to other surrounding fire authorities and to finally press the Government for urgent additional funding to properly resource the very stretched service, something which the Leader and the Cabinet Member have failed to do, despite being mandated over six months ago by a full meeting of this council dated 14 December 2018.
 - (3) Urgently progress the updating of outdated software and communication equipment in the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that there is a clearer picture of operational staffing levels and gaps.
 - (4) Ensure as soon as possible that the Fire and Rescue Service launches an anti-bullying campaign to stamp out any instances of bullying and harassment, which will finally carry out advice that was given to WSFRS following the results of a staff stress survey as long ago as 2017.
 - (5) Take steps to increase the diversity of the workforce, particularly in respect of more female firefighters and more from the BAME communities, and to work with councillors and other bodies across the county to reach out to local people from these minority groups to encourage them to consider becoming both wholetime and on-call firefighters.
 - (6) Do more to tackle shortages of on-call firefighters and the need to finally accept some of the deep-rooted problems with recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters will need more than marginal changes, but a whole new approach that recognises that:
 - (a) more wholetime firefighters are needed to guarantee availability in certain areas of the county; and
 - (b) recruiting and retaining On Call Firefighters crews can be easier in larger settlements within West Sussex, and the first step should be restoring the third fire engine and on-call firefighter crew at Crawley Fire Station.
 - (7) Launch a review, led by an independent person external to this Council, to determine whether alternative governance arrangements for WSFRS may be necessary, given the findings of the inspection report. The review would investigate whether it is still in the best interests of the service for current governance to continue if the County Council, squeezed by continuing Conservative national

government cuts, concludes that it cannot afford to meet its duty to resource the service to the level required to protect the residents of West Sussex with acceptable levels of service and performance. The terms of reference for this review to be drawn up with all relevant parties in WSFRS, and to include their employees' trade union representatives.'

38.2 An amendment was moved by Mrs Russell and seconded by Mr Barrett-Miles as set out below:

'This Council **accepts** ~~notes with dismay~~ the findings of the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection report on the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) with a rating of 'needs improvement' for Efficiency, a rating of 'needs improvement' for Effectiveness and a rating of 'inadequate' for People. ~~It is also the only service in the country not to get a 'good' rating in any category.~~

This Council recognises that staff in WSFRS do an excellent job in protecting people in West Sussex ~~but that they have been let down by a failure of political leadership at the County Council, which has allowed cost-cutting and budget pressures to take priority over the maintenance of what HMICFS considers acceptable standards.~~

~~This has been exacerbated by decisions from the Cabinet that have seen fire stations closed, and second and third fire engines being removed from some remaining stations. Reports from the former Chief Fire Officer confirm they were major reasons for increased response times. Despite the Council's extended response standard for most of the county of 14 minutes, the service has been unable to meet it, as the inspectorate notes, since 2014.~~

~~This Council also recognises that this is the second inspection in recent months that has seen a vital service, important to the welfare and safety of all West Sussex residents, being judged as insufficient to meet the required standard and it has become unsustainable for this council to have confidence in a Leader and Cabinet who have presided over such an outcome. This Council therefore expresses that it has no confidence in the Leader and Cabinet.~~

This Council therefore calls on the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities, **through the Improvement Plan recently adopted after being fully scrutinised by members, and the investment it brings** (or their successors, if and when they are appointed) to:

- (1) **Maintain the commitment to no budget savings** Completely withdraw the cuts to WSFRS proposed for 2019/20 that were put on hold for one year, and **continue to** prioritise the recruitment of additional firefighters to replace those **cut** since 2010.

-
- (2) Stop prevaricating on the clearly unfair funding that WSFRS is receiving compared to other surrounding fire authorities and **Continue** to finally press the Government for urgent additional funding to properly resource these very **important** stretched services, something which the Leader and the Cabinet Member have failed to do, despite being mandated over six months ago by a full meeting of this council dated 14 December 2018.
- (3) **Complete the well-advanced plans to renew** Urgently progress the updating of outdated software and communication equipment in the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that there is a clearer picture of operational staffing levels and gaps.
- (4) **Endorse the Cabinet Member's commitment to** Ensure as soon as possible that the Fire and Rescue Service launches an anti-bullying campaign to stamp out any instances of bullying and harassment, which will finally carry out advice that was given to WSFRS following the results of a staff stress survey as long ago as 2017.
- (5) **Continue to t**Take steps to **maintain the** increase **in** the diversity of the workforce, particularly in respect of more female firefighters and more from the BAME communities, and to work with councillors and other bodies across the county to reach out to local people from these minority groups to encourage them to consider becoming both wholetime and on-call firefighters.
- (6) **Continue with the plans** Do more to tackle shortages of on-call firefighters and the need to **address** finally accept some of the deep-rooted problems with recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters will need more than marginal changes, but a whole new approach that recognises that:
- (a) **we need a study to consider whether** more wholetime firefighters are needed to guarantee availability in certain areas of the county; and
 - (b) recruiting and retaining On Call Firefighters crews can be easier in larger settlements within West Sussex, and the first step should be restoring the third fire engine and on-call firefighter crew at Crawley Fire Station.
- (7) Support the Launch a review of governance, member involvement and scrutiny which the Council's Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee recommended to the Governance Committee, led by an independent person external to this Council, to determine whether alternative governance arrangements for WSFRS may be necessary within the County Council, given the findings of the inspection report. The review would investigate whether it is still in the best interests of the service for current governance to

~~continue if the County Council, squeezed by continuing Conservative national government cuts, concludes that it cannot afford to meet its duty to resource the service to the level required to protect the residents of West Sussex with acceptable levels of service and performance. The terms of reference for this review to be drawn up with all relevant parties in WSFRS, and to include their employees' trade union representatives.'~~

38.3 The amendment was carried.

38.4 An amendment was moved by Dr Walsh and seconded by Mrs Millson as set out below:

'This Council notes with dismay the findings of the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection report on the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) with a rating of 'needs improvement' for Efficiency, a rating of 'needs improvement' for Effectiveness and a rating of 'inadequate' for People. It is also the only service in the country not to get a 'good' rating in any category.

This Council recognises that staff in WSFRS do an excellent job in protecting people in West Sussex but that they have been let down by a failure of political leadership at the County Council, which has allowed cost-cutting and budget pressures to take priority over the maintenance of what HMICFS considers acceptable standards.

This has been exacerbated by decisions from the Cabinet that have seen fire stations closed, and second and third fire engines being removed from some remaining stations. Reports from the former Chief Fire Officer confirm they were major reasons for increased response times. Despite the Council's extended response standard for most of the county of 14 minutes, the service has been unable to meet it, as the inspectorate notes, since 2014.

This Council also recognises that this is the second inspection in recent months that has seen a vital service, important to the welfare and safety of all West Sussex residents, being judged as insufficient to meet the required standard and it has become unsustainable for this council to have confidence in a Leader and Cabinet who have presided over such an outcome. This Council therefore expresses that it has no confidence in the Leader and Cabinet.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities (or their successors, if and when they are appointed) to:

- (1) Completely withdraw the cuts to WSFRS proposed for 2019/20 that were put on hold for one year and prioritise the

recruitment of additional firefighters to replace those cut since 2010.

- (2) Stop prevaricating on the clearly unfair funding that WSFRS is receiving compared to other surrounding fire authorities and to finally press the Government for urgent additional funding to properly resource the very stretched service, something which the Leader and the Cabinet Member have failed to do, despite being mandated over six months ago by a full meeting of this council dated 14 December 2018.
- (3) Urgently progress the updating of outdated software and communication equipment in the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that there is a clearer picture of operational staffing levels and gaps.
- (4) Ensure as soon as possible that the Fire and Rescue Service launches an anti-bullying campaign to stamp out any instances of bullying and harassment, which will finally carry out advice that was given to WSFRS following the results of a staff stress survey as long ago as 2017.
- (5) Take steps to increase the diversity of the workforce, particularly in respect of more female firefighters and more from the BAME communities, and to work with councillors and other bodies across the county to reach out to local people from these minority groups to encourage them to consider becoming both wholetime and on-call firefighters.
- (6) Do more to tackle shortages of on-call firefighters and the need to finally accept some of the deep-rooted problems with recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters will need more than marginal changes, but a whole new approach that recognises that:
 - (a) more wholetime firefighters are needed to guarantee availability in certain areas of the county; and
 - (b) recruiting and retaining On Call Firefighters crews can be easier in larger settlements within West Sussex, and the first step should be restoring the third fire engine and on-call firefighter crew at Crawley Fire Station.
- (7) Launch a review, led by an independent person external to this Council, to determine whether alternative governance arrangements for WSFRS may be necessary, given the findings of the inspection report. The review would investigate whether it is still in the best interests of the service for current governance to continue if the County Council, squeezed by continuing Conservative national government cuts, concludes that it cannot afford to meet its duty to resource the service to the level required to protect the residents of West Sussex with acceptable levels of service and performance. The terms of reference for this review to

be drawn up with all relevant parties in WSFRS, and to include their employees' trade union representatives.

This Council also asks the Leader to publicly apologise to both the staff of the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and to the people of West Sussex, for the failures of this Council that have resulted in this poor inspection being received.'

38.5 The amendment was lost.

38.6 The amended motion, as set out below, was agreed.

'This Council accepts the findings of the recently published Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection report on the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) with a rating of 'needs improvement' for Efficiency, a rating of 'needs improvement' for Effectiveness and a rating of 'inadequate' for People.

This Council recognises that staff in WSFRS do an excellent job in protecting people in West Sussex.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities, through the Improvement Plan recently adopted after being fully scrutinised by members, and the investment it brings to:

- (1) Maintain the commitment to no budget savings to WSFRS and continue to prioritise the recruitment of additional firefighters.
- (2) Continue to press the Government for urgent additional funding to properly resource these very important services.
- (3) Complete the well-advanced plans to renew software and communication equipment in the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that there is a clearer picture of operational staffing levels and gaps.
- (4) Endorse the Cabinet Member's commitment to an anti-bullying campaign to stamp out any instances of bullying and harassment.
- (5) Continue to take steps to maintain the increase in the diversity of the workforce, particularly in respect of more female firefighters and more from the BAME communities, and to work with councillors and other bodies across the county to reach out to local people from these minority groups to encourage them to consider becoming both wholetime and on-call firefighters.
- (6) Continue with the plans to tackle shortages of on-call firefighters and the need to address problems with

recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters recognising that:

- (a) we need a study to consider whether more wholetime firefighters are needed to guarantee availability in certain areas of the county; and
 - (b) recruiting and retaining On Call Firefighters crews can be easier in larger settlements within West Sussex.
- (7) Support the review of governance, member involvement and scrutiny which the Council's Environment, Communities and Fire Select Committee recommended to the Governance Committee to determine whether alternative governance arrangements for WSFRS may be necessary within the County Council.'

39 Resignation of the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities

- 39.1 Following the debate on the motion on the Fire and Rescue Service Inspection Rating, the Chairman agreed to a personal statement by the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities who announced to the Council her resignation as Cabinet Member on ill health grounds.
- 39.2 Group Leaders expressed their best wishes to Ms Kennard on behalf of their groups.
- 39.3 The Leader gave notice of the appointment of Mrs Jacquie Russell as the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities with effect from the end of the Council meeting.

40 Motion on Prospective sale of County Council-owned land at Withy Patch

- 40.1 The following motion was moved by Mr Jones and seconded by Mr Oxlade:

'This Council notes that West Sussex County Council owns the freehold land known as Withy Patch which currently forms part of an area that has planning permission from Adur District Council for an extensive new development, commonly known as New Monks Farm.

This Council recognises that the proposals for a major development and retail park has been a source of considerable controversy in recent years. This Council believes that the continued uncertainty, anger and stress this has caused local residents, is unacceptable and calls on the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to either take action now to reassure the community that the Council will not proceed with selling or transferring this land to developers or to confirm he will not accept any arrangement which attempts to get the Council to agree to waive, or write off, any of the section 106 developers' contributions from the New Monks Farm developers

that will be required to provide sufficient education provision to meet the needs of the resulting community. The needs of West Sussex children and their education must come first.

This Council believes that there is already an increasing shortage of places both in primary and in secondary education in the Adur and Worthing areas with children currently being sent to maintained schools much further from their homes, because the local schools have not got the places for the existing population. The additional population from the New Monks Farm development will inevitably create further pressures and reduce local parents' ability to find school placements close to them without these contributions. Moreover, the additional financial burden of creating places will almost certainly have to be met by this Council, which already faces unprecedented financial pressures without having to absorb the costs of building additional buildings and increasing capacity elsewhere.

This Council also believes that facilitating this development through the sale of the land will result in outcomes entirely at odds with the values recently expressed in the cross-party motion on climate change and the 'climate action pledge'. Not only may the new development increase the local flooding risk, but the increased traffic and congestion on this part of the A27 relating to the increased population and high profile retail offer will exacerbate further the already serious problems relating to pollution and air quality in the current Air Quality Management Areas within the District.

In the event that the Cabinet Member decides to sell or transfer the land it is understood the gypsy and travellers' site at Withy Patch would be required to move to the edge of the development and the residents effectively living directly on the edge of a building site, with all the dust, noise and disruption that such construction would entail. Given what this would mean for that community, this Council also calls on the Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities to undertake a meaningful consultation with those residents as the person accountable for their welfare on the Council's land and to object to the sale of the land should the residents ask for that.

Therefore, for the reasons stated above, this Council urges the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to refuse any sale or transfer of the land at Withy Patch.'

- 40.2 The motion was referred to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources for consideration.

41 West Sussex County Council Annual Report 2018/19

- 41.1 The Leader moved the report on West Sussex County Council Annual Report 2018/19 (pages 41 to 86).

41.2 Resolved –

That the West Sussex Annual Report 2018/19 be noted.

42 Performance and Finance Select Committee: Annual Scrutiny Performance 2018/19

42.1 The Council considered the Annual Scrutiny Newsletter 2018/19 which summarised the work of the Select Committees and reported the performance measures to the end of the year, in the light of a report by the Performance and Finance Select Committee (pages 87 to 108).

42.2 Resolved –

That the Annual Scrutiny Newsletter 2018/19, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

43 Question Time

43.1 Members asked questions of members of the Cabinet on matters relevant to their portfolios and asked questions of chairmen, as set out at Appendix 3. This included questions on those matters contained within the Cabinet report (pages 109 to 112) and a supplementary report (supplement page 1) and written questions and answers pursuant to Standing Order 2.38 (set out at Appendix 2).

44 Governance Committee: Review of Scrutiny and Delegation to Standards Committee

44.1 The Council noted arrangements for a review of scrutiny and considered a delegation to the Standards Committee in relation to recommendations from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman in the light of a report from the Governance Committee (pages 113 to 114).

44.2 Resolved –

That the terms of reference of the Standards Committee be amended to include the delegation set out in paragraph 8 of the report.

45 Retirement of Tony Hill, Front of House Assistant

45.1 On behalf of all members, the Chairman expressed thanks and best wishes to Tony Hill, Front of House Assistant, who was retiring before the next meeting of the Council.

Chairman
The Council rose at 4.15 pm