

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 18 JULY 2013 FROM 7.30PM TO 9.40PM**

Present:- Alistair Auty, Parry Batth, Prue Bray, David Chopping, Gary Cowan, Michael Firmager, Lindsay Ferris, Kay Gilder, Mike Haines, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, John Halsall, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Tim Holton, Philip Houldsworth, John Kaiser, Dianne King, David Lee, Abdul Loyes, Tom McCann, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Ken Miall, Philip Mirfin, Stuart Munro, Barrie Patman, Bob Pitts, Anthony Pollock, Sam Rahmouni, Malcolm Richards, Beth Rowland, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Chris Singleton, David Sleight, Sue Smith, Rob Stanton, Paul Swaddle, Dee Tomlin, Simon Weeks and Bob Wyatt.

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 May 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

17. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Keith Baker, Chris Bowring, UllaKarin Clark, Alistair Corrie, Mike Gore, Guy Grandison, Kate Haines, Lesley Hayward, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Ian Pittock, Angus Ross, Wayne Smith and Shahid Younis.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Deputy Mayor invited a member of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

19.01 Question

Clive Jones asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Would you please let me know how many pupils from Earley and Lower Earley have not been able to get into their first choice primary school or secondary school for the coming September and the number who failed to gain a place at their second choice?

Answer

Thank you Mr Jones for your question. I'll start with primary schools. 84 out of 423 Wokingham resident RG6 area children were not offered their first preference schools. Excluding first preference offers, 47 out of 423 Wokingham resident RG6 area children were not offered their second preference schools. This meant that 376, that's 89%, were offered their first or second preference schools. Just to translate into percentages that is 80% who were offered their first preference.

Secondary schools: 92 out of 399 Wokingham resident RG6 area children were not offered their first preference schools. Excluding first preference offers, 46 out of 399 Wokingham resident RG6 area children were not offered their second preference schools. This means that 353 or 89% were offered their first or second preference schools or 77% their first preference.

Supplementary Question

It is a shame that some children from Lower Earley won't get their first choice secondary school. Will you apologise to these children and their families for the mess that your predecessors have left secondary education in Lower Earley in?

Supplementary Answer

These percentages, 89% for first and second preferences are extremely high. 15 children had no offer but some of these families had special educational needs, families had moved out of the borough or parents had refused the offers made to them. Some of them may also have been going into the independent sector. So those make up the percentages that equate to the 11% who did not receive their first or second preferences. Some of them are also going out of the borough as well, so I don't feel it appropriate to apologise.

20. PETITIONS

The following member of the public presented a petition in relation to the matters indicated.

The Deputy Mayor's decision as to the action to be taken is set out against the petition.

Femi Obileye	Petition against commuter parking in Cavendish Gardens, Winnersh <i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Highways</i>
--------------	---

21. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Mayor referred Members' attention to the pre-circulated list of Mayoral and Deputy-Mayoral engagements.

Members were informed that the July Mayor's Award had been presented to Mark A'Bear for his services as a governor at Polehampton Junior School and more recently at Shinfield Junior School.

22. MILITARY COMMUNITY COVENANT FOR WOKINGHAM BOROUGH

The Council considered the Military Community Covenant for Wokingham Borough.

David Lee thanked the Armed Forces for all the work that they did. The aim of the covenant was to encourage residents and the Council to continue to support the service personnel and their families in the Borough and to promote awareness among the public of those matters which affected armed forces personnel. Although the Garrison would be moving in 2015 there would still be some 300 military families living within the Borough.

Rob Stanton paid tribute to the army personnel and stressed that they should be able to call Wokingham home whilst they were stationed in the area.

Colonel Gibson addressed the Council. He stressed that serving personnel, retired veterans and their dependents based in the area felt very much integrated into the community. Charities such as the British Legion, the Army Benevolent Fund and Help for Heroes did good work in the community and received a good level of support from local people. He and his staff looked forward to working with the Council in taking forward the action plan which underpinned the covenant. Whilst the Garrison was due to move in 2015 he was sure that many retired veterans would choose to settle and remain in the area.

Rachelle Shepherd DuBey commented that she felt that the covenant was vague and questioned whether specific budgets or programmes had been allocated to assist the armed forces and their families.

It was proposed by David Lee and seconded by Rob Stanton that the signing of the Military Community Covenant for Wokingham Borough be supported.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the signing of a Military Community Covenant for Wokingham Borough be supported.

23. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES LEVELS 2013/14

The Council received and considered a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out on Agenda pages 63 to 72, following their annual review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Robin Cops, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel addressed the meeting. He paid tribute to his colleagues on the Panel: Geoff Wilde, Alun Hicks, Anita Grosz and David Nash.

In presenting the report, Robin Cops highlighted the following points:

- The Panel had met 9 times. All Members had been invited to meet the Panel and 13 had done so, including both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Group leaders. Communication had also been received by letter and email and the Panel had benchmarked its findings against similar authorities;
- For the fourth year running no increases were proposed to the level of basic allowance and level of Special Responsibility Allowances;
- The Panel had been asked to look at communication and home office allowance. The Panel had asked that the Council define what the appropriate package was for a Councillor, the environment in which it was used and the expected annual costs;
- Robin Cops commented that the Panel had been asked to consider allowances and expenses for informal working groups. The Panel had seen no case for this and thought that the work was within the remit of a councillor. The Panel recommended that a mechanism for recording Members' participation in such working group meetings, in order to enable them to claim mileage, be established;
- The Panel had also been asked to look at parking costs for Members when attending meetings at Shute End during the day. Following the consideration of this matter, they had recommended that an equitable and auditable system be proposed that would allow Members to cover their parking costs when on approved duties;
- The Panel had been concerned about Members' knowledge of the Members' Allowances Scheme. The Panel felt that allowances were paid to recognise some time and responsibility which went with what was ultimately a voluntary role. The Panel felt it was very important for Members to be given a basic introduction to the rules regarding Members' Allowances and how they were calculated as part of their induction process and that this should also be extended to all Members;
- The Panel were aware that the Leader had appointed 6 Deputy Executive Members who would report to him. The Panel had been asked to consider SRA's for these positions. The Panel felt that SRAs were paid for accountability and responsibility above that expected of Members rather than workload. It was noted that the Executive could not legally exceed 10 members. The Panel had concerns about

giving out too many SRAs and felt that the information that they had received regarding the role of the Deputy Executives, did not demonstrate that an SRA should be recommended for this position.

David Lee thanked the Independent Remuneration Panel for their report and recommendations and proposed the following amended recommendations which were seconded by Rob Stanton.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council agree:

- 1) to accept the Independent Remuneration Panel's Recommendations (1)-(5) and (7) as set out in their report;
- 2) that Recommendation (6) not be adopted;
- 3) to an additional recommendation as follows:

"Deputy Executive Members to be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance in the sum of £2,000, backdated from their date of appointment, and a supplementary budget be provided to support the sum of £12,000 that will be required."

David Lee commented that whilst Members received some £2,000 less in basic allowance in comparison to the average basic allowance for unitary authorities, there had been no appetite to increase the basic allowance. Staff had not received an increase for a number of years. In relation to recommendation (6) which stated that 'The Council investigates whether an equitable and auditable system could be proposed to Members that allows Members to cover their parking costs when on approved duties,' he proposed that this not be adopted. He did not feel that recommendation (6) should be supported because staff also had to pay for parking.

With regards to the position of Deputy Executive Members, David Lee emphasised that he thought them to be vital in ensuring the future financial viability of the Council in these financially difficult times and that there should be some recognition for carrying out additional work. He explained that the Deputy Executive Members would report to Council, could be asked Public and Member questions and could be required to attend Executive meetings. He went on to state that he believed the role was at least on a par with an Overview and Scrutiny Committee chairman and that he considered that the payment of Deputy Executive Members was admissible under The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Section 5 1 (i).

Prue Bray emphasised that she did not agree with the payment of Deputy Executive Members and questioned the point of having an Independent Remuneration Panel if Members did not follow their recommendations. She asked that next year the Independent Remuneration Panel be asked to look at the remuneration of Non-Executive Directors.

Following the debate of the Motion and prior to a vote being held, six Members in accordance with Rule of Procedure 4.2.15.15 requested that a recorded vote be taken for recommendation 3 of the amended recommendations.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Alistair Auty	Prue Bray	John Halsall
Parry Bath	Lindsay Ferris	Chris Singleton
David Chopping	Kay Gilder	Paul Swaddle
Gary Cowan	Tom McCann	Bob Wyatt
Michael Firmager	Sam Rahmouni	
Mike Haines	Beth Rowland	
Charlotte Haitham Taylor	Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	
Pauline Helliard-Symons	Sue Smith	
Philip Houldsworth	Dee Tomlin	
Tim Holton		
John Kaiser		
Dianne King		
David Lee		
Abdul Loyes		
Julian McGhee Sumner		
Ken Miall		
Philip Mirfin		
Stuart Munro		
Barrie Patman		
Bob Pitts		
Anthony Pollock		
Malcolm Richards		
David Sleight		
Rob Stanton		
Simon Weeks		

Upon being put to the vote it was carried.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) there should be no change to the level of the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance.
- 2) there should be no changes made to the multiples of the Special Responsibility Allowances paid to those roles as set out in the current Members' Allowances Scheme.
- 3) the £500 component of the Basic Allowance for the provision of IT, communication and home office should continue to be claimed only by those Members who provide facilities which allow constituents and Officers to communicate with them by e-mail and the self-certification process be continued.
- 4) the Council carries out a full review of the IT and support provided to Councillors.
- 5) the Council establishes a mechanism for recording Members' attendances at Working Group meetings to enable them to claim mileage and Democratic Services be advised of attendees accordingly, following the meetings.
- 6) as part of their induction, Members receive training in relation to remuneration and how the Members' allowances scheme and expenses works. Refresher training for existing Members should also be provided.

- 7) Deputy Executive Members be paid a Special Responsibility Allowance in the sum of £2,000, backdated from their date of appointment, and a supplementary budget be provided to support the sum of £12,000 that will be required.

24. CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL REVIEW

The Council received and considered the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Review.

Charlotte Haitham Taylor reminded Members of their responsibilities as corporate parents and thanked the staff, partner agencies, Children in Care Council and members of the Corporate Parenting Board who had all contributed to the Annual Review. Charlotte Haitham Taylor informed Members that there were still challenges ahead, recruiting new carers was a top priority and all Members were encouraged to assist with this. If there were more foster carers in the Borough more stability would be achieved, as would additional placements in the Borough and potentially more options for children in care.

It was proposed by Charlotte Haitham Taylor and seconded by Kay Gilder that the report be noted.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Review and action plan be noted.

25. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

The Council received and considered a report, as set out in Agenda pages 112 and 125, which proposed the approval of the Wokingham Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

It was proposed by Julian McGhee Sumner and seconded by David Lee that the Wokingham Borough Health and Wellbeing Strategy be approved.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Health and Wellbeing Strategy be approved.

**26. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK –
REMENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA APPLICATION FOR REMENHAM**

The Council received and considered a report, as set out in Agenda pages 126-129, which proposed that Remenham Parish be designated as a Neighbourhood Area.

It was proposed by John Halsall and seconded by Rob Stanton that Remenham Parish be designated as a Neighbourhood Area.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Remenham Parish be designated as a Neighbourhood Area

27. DISAPPLYING POLITICAL BALANCE RULES ON THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Council received and considered a report, as set out in Agenda pages 130-131, which proposed that the political balance rules be disappplied for the Planning Committee in order

that the Liberal Democrat Group could take up the seat which had not been filled by the Independent Group. It was noted that in accordance with legislation, that in order for this item to be carried it had to receive unanimous support.

The importance of having the Planning Committee at full strength at a time when a large number of major planning applications were anticipated due to the Strategic Development Location programme, was highlighted.

It was proposed by Paul Swaddle and seconded by Prue Bray that the political balance rule be disappplied for the Planning Committee and that Lindsay Ferris be appointed to the vacant seat on the Planning Committee for the remainder of the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) in accordance with the provisions of Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 Council unanimously agree to disapply the proportionality rules in relation to the membership of the Planning Committee for the 2013/14 Municipal Year only, in order that the Independent Group can give up their previously allocated seat to the Liberal Democrat Group;
- 2) that Councillor Lindsay Ferris be appointed to the vacant seat on the Planning Committee for the remainder of the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

28. CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION – FILMING AND RECORDING PROTOCOL

The Council received and considered a report, as set out in Agenda pages 132-137, containing a proposed Filming and Recording Protocol.

Rob Stanton put forward the following amended recommendations which was seconded by Simon Weeks and accepted by the proposer to the report, Paul Swaddle:

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 1) adopt the Filming and Recording Protocol, subject to it only being applicable for meetings of the Council and Executive,
- 2) agree to the inclusion of the amended Filming and Recording Protocol in the Council's Constitution;
- 3) ask the Constitution Review Working Group to review the Filming and Recording Protocol in 12 months' time and at that time consider whether it would be appropriate to extend it to other meetings which are part of the Council's decision making process.

Rob Stanton emphasised the importance of openness and transparency. However, concerns had been expressed regarding the filming of meetings such as the Planning Committee, which were quasi-judicial. Rob Stanton proposed that the filming and recording protocol be applied to meetings of Full Council and public meetings of the Executive only and that the Constitution Review Working Group be asked to undertake a review in a year's time to measure how the Filming and Recording Protocol had worked and to investigate whether it should be extended to other decision making Committees.

Prue Bray commented that 12 months was some time away and suggested that Overview and Scrutiny be asked to look at what other similar Councils were doing in this area to help speed up the review process.

The report and amended recommendations was proposed by Paul Swaddle and seconded by Prue Bray.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED That Council:

- 1) adopt the Filming and Recording Protocol, subject to it only being applicable for meetings of the Council and Executive.
- 2) agree to the inclusion of the amended Filming and Recording Protocol in the Council's Constitution.
- 3) ask the Constitution Review Working Group to review the Filming and Recording Protocol in 12 months' time and at that time consider whether it would be appropriate to extend it to other meetings which are part of the Council's decision making process.

29. STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, AND EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

David Lee, Leader of Council

Thank you very much Mr Mayor. I know you're all fully aware at this stage that we are the lowest funded authority in the country. I am also certain that everyone knows that the country is in a very difficult time financially. However, I'm not sure that our colleagues in the Liberal Party are as fully aware as they could be. Let me summarise where we are, we raised 84% of our expenditure, excluding schools, locally through council tax and charges. We get 14% of our funding from Central Government. The average council gets 50%. Next year we'll have a further 10% cut which will be some £2million. Just announced, we will suffer an additional cut of £600,000 when the Government top slices our New Homes bonus by 30% and gives it to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). We have growth pressures from an ageing population and other areas of some £4million. Next year and the year after and the year after that, we will have to save over £7million each year. We as an authority are working hard to make these savings without unduly affecting our services. All departments are working flat out to become more efficient and cost effective.

We have heard about efficiencies in youth provision and it has been explained very clearly that buildings will not be closed but the way the service is operating will change. The service will still be provided to those who most need it. We are asking for local communities to step up to the plate and take on these buildings for use of local scout groups and local clubs and groups. I'm delighted to say that Woodley and Twyford have already risen to this offer. There is currently a petition going on organised by our Liberal colleagues. When I look at the comments posted I am somewhat surprised. A former member of this Council, Phil Challis, states 'Wokingham Borough Council have the wrong priorities.' That's it, full stop. This is a very easy statement to make but what are the right priorities? Is Phil suggesting that providing excellent youth services to those who most need it, is wrong? Is it wrong to focus our very scarce resources on the elderly vulnerable such as the extra care in Woodley or the super new learning disabled home just across the road at Beeches Manor? Another comment states 'Many of our students from the local

school use the youth centre.’ Obviously this person has been led to believe by someone that the buildings are closing. They are not. We as an authority have to implement cuts and I make apologies for this. It is not something I relish but something we have to do to preserve the long term viability of this Council and to protect the services which are absolutely vital. Indeed, Portsmouth Council, as with other councils throughout the land, is having to make cuts. In Portsmouth’s case, some £9million and it should be noted that one of Portsmouth’s cuts involves reducing their children’s centres from 16 to 9. One other thing about Portsmouth is that it is a Liberal run council.

So the Liberals in Portsmouth understand the reality of the current economic crisis. When will our Liberal colleagues here in Wokingham rise to the challenge and bring forward well thought out saving plans instead of simply criticising? Do you as a party understand the financial state of the country or do you think somehow it does not apply to Wokingham? I will issue you tonight with this challenge. Bring forward your proposals to see this authority through the difficult times ahead with the clear knowledge that our coalition government is having to bring in savings nationally. You can no longer stand on the sidelines and pretend there is no problem. Show the residents, not the political gesturing in here, especially the young people, that you care about their long term future and not simply your own political ends. Show us your plans and stop constantly going on about the evils of dog bins and the evils of asking residents to pay towards services such as green waste or going on about the catastrophe of the size of blue bags, catastrophe being your word Prue. I would suggest that a catastrophe is an airline crash. The wrong size blue bag is a slight inconvenience but saved this authority £1million. You have suggested nothing to help this authority. All parties sit on the many working groups established to ensure our long term future so take the opportunity to work for the betterment of our Borough and move away from the simple approach of criticising. I can reassure the residents of this Borough that this ruling Conservative administration does understand the realities of the world and will continue to do our best to ensure that the Borough remains one of the best places to live and bring up children.

Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Executive Member for Children’s Services

I wanted to start by announcing at Council the names of the three new primary schools. The school at Smith’s Walk will be called Windmill Primary School. I’ve been informed that this name has been chosen because historically there has been a mill on that site. The school at Winnersh Farm will appropriately be named Wheatfields and the Charvil School will be named Charvil Piggott Primary School. I’m pleased to report that building work on all three schools is going well despite the challenges this heatwave is causing for the outside workers in particular. Day by day we’re seeing big changes and if you want to see some up-to-date photographs you need to go to the Wokingham work Facebook page to have a look.

I’d like to draw everyone’s attention to the admissions round for Wheatfields and Windmill Primary Schools. This is now open and will run until 29th July. Offers will be made on 2 August and parents and carers will have until 16 August to accept. Today has seen a number of Ofsted reports published and I’d like to start by congratulating the Colleton Primary and St Crispin’s Secondary School. Both were judged to be good and in both reports leadership and management were found to be outstanding. Some more great news today, Addington School was inspected by Ofsted earlier in the month and was found to be outstanding in all four areas of the inspection. Congratulations to them too. This report is a reflection of the dedication of the staff, leadership, governors and the school community of this exceptional school. I’ve read many Ofsted reports but I recommend that everyone takes just a few moments to look at this one in particular.

It's also apt timing that I mention that six students came here from Addington last week to do some work experience. They had the opportunity to work in different departments and do lots of different activities including going on site visits. Three pupils even went to one of the world's leading Ferrari restoration companies and saw one of the world's most expensive cars worth £28million. I hope that more students will come back again soon and that other local businesses will expand their work placements to more of our young people in our Borough to give them more opportunities to try out something new and gain some experience in the workplace.

Rob Stanton, Deputy Leader

I'm going to be brief as I think Members have heard enough from me tonight. I was planning to update Council on our planned New Economic Plan which is necessary, mainly due to the expiry of the current one which finishes at the end of the year. But of course any economic plan we have in and around Wokingham has to take into account two new features. One is clearly the new Business, Skills and Enterprise Partnership which is in its embryo form and that is the son of the LSP. Quite clearly we have to agree a mission with the new partnership so that it hooks in with our Economic Strategy and the further work of the LEP. I will bring some details of that in the autumn when we're further down the road on it. I have to say Deputy Mayor, it is essential we do link with the LEP. They clearly have the money and they are getting even more money by this top slicing from building development. I have to say they're not the most democratic outfit. There's about 30 members and 6 of them are elected members and the rest are not. So it's always important for us to be in there fighting our corner for investment in and around the Borough. I think it's a very good outfit and it will attract investment. Certainly it's got the support of the government and anyone who was at the LGA Conference will have seen Michael Heseltine really espousing the great strengths of the new economic drive and the investment that is being made, but of course that will be made all through the LEPs. It is really important that we bring together a strategy which links all three and I will be doing that this autumn.

30. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Deputy Mayor invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

30.01 Question

Beth Rowland asked the Executive Member for General Planning and Affordable Housing the following question:

In March Councillor Baker advised Council that the Section106 report detailing the Section 106 receipts, allocations and monies being held just needed some tweaking. I'd like to know when it will be published.

Answer

Thank you for your question Beth. As Executive Member with responsibility for S106 contributions I will be answering your question tonight. As you know S106 expenditure is carefully controlled and monitored by Officers and Members and it should be noted that the major allocations of funding are approved by the Council's Executive and thus are already in the public domain. That said however we are keen to be more transparent on this issue and are currently working to ensure that the details can be published in an

accurate and comprehensive format that is useful to the general public. There are some complexities to this; in particular we need to show how S106 money can be allocated across a number of towns and parishes as it needs to be pooled for major projects such as schools and infrastructure. It is not as simple as a development in a parish means money is spent in that parish. The principle is that a development brings benefit to the area but it can cross boundaries. We are working on these complexities and we will ensure when we do publish the details it will be in a way which will add clarity rather than confusion and we will be able to do this by the end of September 2013.

Supplementary Question

Your colleagues on the Royal Borough have announced a Big Society scheme to devolve more power to parishes, in this case spending S106 contributions in their areas. I have a copy of the press release here. When are you planning to do this?

Supplementary Answer

We do consult obviously with Parish and Town Councils and with the inception of the Community Infrastructure Levy, and that's a moving feast unfortunately, they will obviously get a contribution. The contribution will depend very much on whether or not they have in place a plan. At the moment we do not plan to change anything with regards to that.

30.02 Question

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Highways the following question which was answered by the Deputy Leader in his absence:

The Executive agreed in June to adopt the Park & Ride Strategy. Will there be a charge for parking your car at the Winnersh Park & Ride when it is relocated to Winnersh train station?

Answer

Thanks for the question. Work is underway to design a new park and ride facility at Winnersh next to Winnersh Triangle railway station. A planning application for the new site is due to go to committee soon.

Once planning approval has been granted detailed work can start on the operation of the site. Officers will work to ensure the facility provides an excellent facility for users, is cost effective for the Council, vital in the current economic situation and has a positive impact on the local area. We also note that tonight's petition which was received earlier in the meeting, also alluded to this issue. However at this stage no decision has been made about the charging regime.

Particular local issues relating to parking have already been flagged up and will be considered when determining the best mode of operation of the new site.

Supplementary Question

Will you consider some consultation with the local residents and with pensioners who may be affected by the charge?

Supplementary Answer

I'll pass it on to Keith Baker. I think that will be the best way. Personally, I have no objection.

30.3 Question

Prue Bray asked the Leader of Council the following question:

I wrote to the Leader of the Council on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group on 17th June expressing our concerns and questions relating to the governance arrangements for the Council owned companies OPTALIS & WHL. Why have you not acknowledged or replied to this letter?

Answer

I have replied and I trust you find my response helpful.

Supplementary Question

I sent a letter to David on 17 June as the question alludes to. He replied on 15 July. David, you've answered three of our points in that letter out of six, positively. My question is do you agree that it would be better to reply to my letters rather than waiting until I've had to submit a question to Council to get a reply?

Supplementary Answer

I think it is important that I reply with the correct answer and I had to speak to a number of people to actually get that answer. In addition Prue, since receiving your letter I have been on almost constant Council business which I will quickly summarise for you just from the beginning of this month. The 9th I attended a LEP Board meeting. I then met with the University of Reading to ensure we obtained the required infrastructure. I then had a meeting with Optalis and I then had a meeting in the evening with residents. On 10th I had a Wellbeing Board meeting in London, I had a meeting with our Chief Executive, I attended the Children's Scrutiny Committee and I attended a North Wokingham Forum. On 11th I had a meeting with Nick Boles in London and I chaired the local Health Board. On 12th I actually impacted on the Council and I attended my own company's business affairs. On 15th I had a meeting with developers. I then had a meeting with Haslams regarding the University of Reading's application. On 16th I had meetings to discuss communications and I then had a meeting in London with Greg Clark. On 17th I had a meeting regarding the City Deal to get proper information.

31.00 Questions on Minutes and Ward Matters

31.1 Question

Dee Tomlin asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

At 30 May Executive I asked why Wokingham Direct was undertaking work which was the contractual responsibility of Veolia. The response was that Veolia were required to take telephone calls for the provision of green waste. However, I see renewal letters sent to residents ask them to contact Wokingham Direct. So is Wokingham Borough Council now undertaking that work, in which case where is our refund from Veolia?

Answer

As an authority we do our best to help our residents so we give them one telephone number. If they have a problem they contact us and we sort it out. That's what we're here for, to look after the residents.

31.2 Question

Lindsay Ferris asked the Deputy Leader the following question:

I'm very concerned that grass cutting in public areas is not being completed as scheduled and also that Quadron are behind. WBC is looking scruffy and unloved in places and it looks bad. Some of you are aware that there was a fire on the grass in New Bath Road in Twyford. Was there anything relating to the fact, and it may just be the hot weather I know, that the grass may or may not have been cut? There have been a number of instances of residents saying that there was about an 8 week, maybe 10 week period, between grass cutting in April/May/June this year and I'd like an understanding of what's happening.

Answer

I don't exactly know the answer. I have to say you're very lucky if you've got any grass growing, my lawn has died. Could you email that to me and I'll get Angus to have a look at it and we'll come back to you?

31.3 Question

Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for General Planning and Affordable Housing the following question:

Residents in Alder Mews in Sindlesham want something done about the parking in their road but I found out that their road hasn't been adopted. People have been living there for over 7 years, why has the Council not chased the developer up so the road can be adopted?

Answer:

That's an excellent question but I'm afraid I can't answer it at the moment. I can give you a written answer on that though.

31.4 Question

Beth Rowland asked the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Highways the following question which was answered by the Deputy Leader in his absence.

I'm very concerned about the state of Woodley's roads. For example Fairwater Drive in my ward was damaged by having the cycleway put in. I've reported potholes several times. Wilderness Road, which isn't in my ward, but I drive up and down every day, has got some disgraceful potholes in it. They're not as bad as Readings but they're not good enough for Wokingham. Will you have a look at these as a matter of priority and report back when they have been repaired?

Answer:

I didn't catch all the roads you said Beth so if you email them to me I will get our roads maestro to look at them. The only thing I would hope is that we don't have to tell you when they've been done as you should notice.

David Chopping also provided the following response:

Wilderness Road, which is in my ward, is due for resurfacing in the next 8 weeks. We as local councillors have been liaising with the various undertakers to ensure that everything is complete in the way of the drainage being put right, electrics being put right, and we have asked for the road to be resurfaced during the school summer holidays to avoid the disruption that would otherwise occur during the normal working week.

31.5 Question

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Leader of the Council the following question.

The temporary accommodation owned by Wokingham Borough Council in Grovelands are in an awful state and since David continually reminds us that we're the poorest funded authority in the country, why is Wokingham Borough Council spending money putting people in B&Bs in Slough when the mobile homes could be looked after and provide a decent place to live in Winnersh?

Answer:

I totally agree with you Rachelle and that's exactly why I appointed the Deputy Executive Member to look after Affordable Housing who will get that because this Council has never appreciated what it can do with the contributions from developers. That is one of our number one priorities, looking after the vulnerable and if you're talking about the person who is housed in Slough I think it was very clearly reported on the radio, the position of that lady. If you would like a transcript of that radio interview I am more than happy to give it to you.

32. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Kay Gilder and seconded by Dee Tomlin:

"The Executive meet next week to consider and decide upon the £680,000 cuts to the Borough's Youth Services and Children's Centres. This Council recognises that residents are opposed to these ill thought through cuts and rushed consultation. For the sake of the young people and children affected, this Council calls upon the Executive to stop the closure of Children's Centres and Youth Centres immediately."

Following the debate of the Motion and prior to a vote being held, six Members in accordance with Rule of Procedure 4.2.15.15 requested that a recorded vote be taken.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAINED
Prue Bray	Alistair Auty	Chris Singleton
Lindsay Ferris	Parry Bath	
Kay Gilder	David Chopping	
Tom McCann	Gary Cowan	
Sam Rahmouni	Michael Firmager	
Beth Rowland	Mike Haines	
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey	Charlotte Haitham Taylor	
Sue Smith	John Halsall	
Dee Tomlin	Pauline Helliari-Symons	
	Philip Houldsworth	
	Tim Holton	
	John Kaiser	
	Dianne King	
	David Lee	
	Abdul Loyes	
	Julian McGhee-Sumner	
	Philip Mirfin	
	Stuart Munro	
	Barrie Patman	

	Bob Pitts	
	Antony Pollock	
	Malcolm Richards	
	David Sleight	
	Rob Stanton	
	Paul Swaddle	
	Simon Weeks	
	Bob Wyatt	

Consequently, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be lost.

These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Council

If you need help in understanding this document or if you would like a copy of it in large print please contact one of our Team Support Officers.