

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2018 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.02 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Pauline Jorgensen (Chairman), Richard Dolinski, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Norman Jorgensen, Philip Mirfin, Anthony Pollock and Simon Weeks

Other Councillors Present

Malcolm Richards

51. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Charlotte Haitham Taylor and Stuart Munro.

52. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 26 July 2018 and the Extraordinary Executive held on 28 August 2018 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Deputy Leader of Council.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Norman Jorgensen declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 54 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that his wife was a paid Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillor Jorgensen remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor Pauline Jorgensen declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 54 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that she was a paid Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillor Jorgensen remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillors Philip Mirfin and Anthony Pollock declared personal interests in Agenda Item 54 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that they were paid Non-Executive Directors of Optalis Holdings Ltd. Councillors Mirfin and Pollock remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

54. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

54.1 Therese Doherty had asked the Executive Member for Regeneration the following question. Due to her inability to attend the meeting a written reply was provided:

Evidence of recent joy riding skid marks, why are there no health and safety dividers between vehicles and pedestrians in Market Place?

Answer

Following consultation, it was agreed that one of the key objectives for the Market Place project was to de-clutter the area in order to make it more attractive to shoppers and better for hosting community events. Therefore, the design attempted to keep signage and

barriers to a minimum and we believe this has been achieved and that the Market Place now looks far more welcoming to all visitors. However, safety is our primary concern and a safety audit of the site has been carried out in order to assess all issues, including vehicles illegally ignoring the no entry signs and driving on to the pedestrian area.

There is a balance between allowing time for everybody to get used to the new layout and the obvious need to ensure safety. We believe the right way to achieve this balance is through the professional, independent safety audit carried out and we will make any modifications deemed necessary once we have the findings.

55. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Chairman invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members

55.1 Gary Cowan had asked the Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries the following question. Due to his inability to attend the meeting a written reply was provided:

Can the Executive Member responsible for Minerals and Waste confirm that all the evidence gathered by this Council to date on this subject has been or will be made available to Hants CC?

Answer

Hampshire Services have been jointly commissioned by the four authorities of Wokingham, Bracknell Forest, Reading and RBWM (known as the central and eastern Berkshire authorities) to prepare a Joint Minerals and Waste Plan. The Joint Plan will provide a robust strategy to ensure there is an adequate mineral supply and to ensure the sustainable management of waste.

A large amount of data and information has been made available by all authorities through the plan preparation process to assist with work to prepare the Plan. In some cases, due to previous joint working, this has included data collected at a Berkshire wide scale. Officers continue to liaise regularly with Hampshire Services.

56. SHAREHOLDERS' REPORT

(Councillors Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Philip Mirfin and Anthony Pollock declared personal interests in this item)

The Executive considered a report setting out the budget monitoring position and providing an operational update on the work of the Council Owned Companies for the period to 31 July 2018.

Councillor Pollock went through the report and with regard to Wokingham Housing Ltd highlighted: the profit of £600k that had been generated; the operational loans of £1m which had been repaid to the Council; the plans to deliver 360 new homes over the coming years with between 50 and 75 homes every year; and the sites that were currently being programmed through the planning system.

The report showed that Optalis had achieved cost savings of over £1m per annum, which was equivalent to approximately £8m over the life of the company. Councillor Pollock reminded Members that the turnover had increased as a result of the merger with the

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead which would provide a good basis for growth. It was noted that the profit for 2018/19 was estimated to be £48k.

Councillor Pollock advised that following the departure of the previous Chief Executive of Optalis a number of inspections by CQC rated services as “requiring improvement”. He was pleased to report that Martin Farrow, the new Chief Executive, had put in place systems which it was believed would assist in achieving a “good” rating at future CQC inspections.

During an explanation of how Optalis’s profit was worked out Councillor Pollock highlighted the private work that had been undertaken by the Company including the Supported Employment Contract with Reading College which assisted young people with learning disabilities gain employment. He was pleased to report that 9 out of 10 customers who entered the service gained employment or work experience as a result of the programme.

Members noted that Angela Morris, the previous Operations Director, had now taken on the joint role of Director of Adult Social Services with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Councillor Norman Jorgensen was pleased to note that work was due to start on the Tape Lane site. It was confirmed that 5 x 3-bedroom houses, 5 x 2-bedroom houses and one bungalow would be built on that site; all of which would be Council housing, the first for some while.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 31 July 2018 be noted;
- 2) the operational update for the period to 31 July 2018 be noted.

57. 21ST CENTURY COUNCIL - UPDATE

The Executive considered a report setting out the progress of the Council’s 21st Century change programme.

During her introduction of the report the Deputy Leader of Council drew Members’ attention to recent improvements to the Council’s website, including the new mapping software. In the longer term it was expected that faults, eg with street lights etc, could be reported using this software. Members also noted that a Permanent Director of Children’s Services, Carol Cammiss, had recently been appointed.

Councillor Pollock was pleased to note that the £4m savings expected from the C21 change programme were still on target to be delivered; even if the timing was going to be different to that originally envisaged. In response to a query from Councillor Pollock it was confirmed that customer satisfaction with the new systems and processes would be monitored.

Members were advised by Councillor Weeks that the Planning Department’s complete database and search system, which had not been available during the week as part of the major upgrade, was expected to be available on Monday 1 October.

RESOLVED: That the progress in implementing the 21st Century Council programme be noted.

58. APPROVAL OF RE3 WASTE STRATEGY

The Executive considered a report relating to the proposed re3 Waste Strategy as approved by the re3 Joint Waste Board on 27 April 2018.

The Executive Member for Environment advised the meeting that the Waste Strategy contained two principle aims: to reduce the net cost of disposing of waste; and to recycle 50% of Wokingham's waste by 2020. By diverting waste from the most expensive disposal methods towards recycling could deliver savings of around £100 per tonne. Councillor Jorgensen stated that in order to achieve these aims there was a need to maximise the use of the existing services eg black boxes, green waste collection and the glass bank system. In addition new services, such as the food waste service which was due to be introduced from April 2019, were expected to add around 7% to the Council's recycling figure.

Councillor Jorgensen highlighted the fact that there were some items, eg bottom ash from the incinerator and wood currently used in biomass energy from waste, which although strictly recycled were not allowed to be counted towards the Council's targets. If they were counted it was noted that they would have added a further 15% to the Council's recycling figures.

Members were advised that earlier this year re3 had introduced a scheme whereby green waste, which had come from the recycling centres, gone for composting and then back as compost had been sold to residents. This had proved to be very popular and had sold out within a couple of weeks. The plan was to sell more compost next spring.

Councillor Weeks queried whether accepting pots, tubs and trays, which commenced in April, had made a measurable increase. Councillor Jorgensen stated that it was too early to give a definitive answer but it was looking very encouraging.

Councillor Jorgensen highlighted the recent opening of the Waste Recycling Centre to visitors as part of Recycling Week and advised that this had proved very popular and showing the process of separating waste into different streams had received positive feedback.

Councillor Mirfin queried whether the soon to be introduced collection of food waste would have an impact on the increase in the rat population in certain areas of the Borough. It was confirmed that food would be stored and put out in secure, strong, plastic containers so rats and cats should not be able to access the contents and this should assist with the problem.

In response to a query about the inferior nature of the current blue bin bags Councillor Jorgensen stated that there had been a problem with the machine that produced the bags but confirmed that in the future the bin bags would revert to the previous style and quality.

REVOLVED that:

- 1) the re3 Waste Strategy 2018-2020, as recommended by the re3 Joint Waste Disposal Board on 27 April 2018, be adopted;
- 2) the outline objectives allocated to Wokingham with the Strategy, as set out in attachment 1 to the report and the Executive Summary, be noted.

59. AMENDMENTS TO SACRE CONSTITUTION

The Executive considered a report setting out proposed amendments to the SACRE Constitution which would revise the membership requirements for SACRE.

In her introduction of the report the Executive Member for Children's Services provided background to the work of SACRE which was a statutory body that advised on the teaching of Religious Education in schools. Councillor Helliard-Symons went through the proposed changes, one of which was that instead of stating the number of representatives from specific Christian denominations the four representatives could come from any of these denominations. A similar change was proposed to the representation in the Teachers and Teaching Union group.

Councillor Helliard-Symons felt that the proposals should help with attendance and make it easier to fill the vacancies that existed.

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the SACRE Constitution – Section 1 Membership Structure, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be accepted.

60. WOKINGHAM HOUSING LIMITED (WHL) DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES - WELLINGTON ROAD/STATION ROAD AND FORMER WOODLEY AGE CONCERN SITES

The Executive considered a report setting out a proposal that a Council owned housing company be selected as the development partner for housing schemes at Wellington Road/Station Road, Wokingham and the former Woodley Age Concern Site in Woodley.

In introducing the report the Executive Member for Housing drew Members' attention to the two sites that were being proposed for development of more affordable housing and thanked the Ward Members for their help in making sure that the schemes were right for the relevant Wards. Councillor Jorgensen advised that the scheme would be funded by a mixture of S106 commuted sums, borrowing and grant funding. It was noted that 9 x 1-bed and 10 x 2-bed apartments were being proposed on the Wellington Road site and 10 houses, with a tenure mix of social rent and shared ownership, on the Woodley Age Concern site which would provide opportunities for people who required housing but may not be able to afford full commercial rates.

In relation to the Wellington Road/Station Road site Councillor Mirfin stated that he was delighted the proposal was going forward, particularly as the site was one of the gateways into the Town and had been derelict for a long time. He advised that it was important to get the right design on the site and to this end the Council had been working and would continue to consult with local residents to ensure that what was being proposed was right for the area.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Wokingham Housing Limited or another Council-owned Local Housing Company be selected as the development partner for housing schemes at the following sites:
 - Land at Wellington Road/Station Road, Wokingham;
 - Land at the former Woodley Age Concern, South Lake Crescent, Woodley.

- 2) the Council transfers the Wellington Road/Station Road and land at the former Woodley Age Concern sites to a Council-owned housing company on terms to be agreed by the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Lead Members for Housing and Finance;
- 3) the sites subject to Recommendation 1 above are appropriated for planning purposes under section 227 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972;
- 4) the proposed funding model, including the allocation of up to £550,000 Section 106 receipts for the provision of affordable housing, in accordance with the Part 2 Report, be approved;
- 5) the development brief for these sites, including the proposed tenure mix be approved;
- 6) the transfer of land and funding for the Wellington Road/Station Road and former Woodley Age Concern site developments will be subject to WHL securing a planning consent for the schemes and the necessary Board approvals.