

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 25 MAY 2017 FROM 7.30 PM TO 7.55 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Charlotte Haitham Taylor (Chairman), David Lee, Mark Ashwell, Chris Bowring, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Stuart Munro and Oliver Whittle

Other Councillors Present

Richard Dolinski
Lindsay Ferris
Pauline Jorgensen
John Kaiser
Dianne King
Charles Margetts
Malcolm Richards
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Rob Stanton

1. MINUTE SILENCE

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Leader of the Council paid tribute to the victims of the terror attack in Manchester and conveyed the Council's deepest sympathy for the families and children and communities across the country whose lives had been torn apart. On behalf of Members and Officers Councillor Haitham Taylor also commended the courage of all those who went to the aid of others during the chaos that followed and praised the bravery of the emergency and support services for their remarkable and swift efforts whilst putting their lives at risk to save others. Councillor Haitham Taylor led the meeting in a minute of silence.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Norman Jorgensen and Simon Weeks.

Councillor Michael Firmager attended the meeting on behalf of Councillor Jorgensen. In accordance with legislation Councillor Firmager could take part in any discussions but was not entitled to vote.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 30 March 2017 and the Extraordinary Executive held on 25 April 2017 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Stuart Munro declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6, Council Owned Companies Business, by virtue of the fact that he was paid Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillor Munro remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor David Lee declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6, Council Owned Companies Business, by virtue of the fact that he was a paid Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd and Optalis Holdings Ltd. Councillor Lee confirmed that he would be

standing down from his role on Optalis Holdings shortly as the structure of that company would be changing. Councillor Lee remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

5.1 Peter Must asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

In his answer to my question at the meeting of the Executive on 24 November 2016 about the Council's plans to provide, with Network Rail, a single footbridge across both railway lines at the Tanhouse crossing, the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration said: "The Tanhouse Lane crossing is one of four potential footbridge improvements identified on the Council's Community Infrastructure List, the 123 list, but is not currently in the Council's capital programme. At the meeting of the Planning Committee on 1 February 2017 a spokesman from Network Rail said it was his company's intention to replace the current footbridge over the Waterloo line in 2019. Given that such a bridge would not span both lines, could the Executive Member say what plans are now in progress to ensure that money is found, whether from CIL or other sources, to share the cost with Network Rail of providing a disability-compliant bridge spanning both lines?"

Answer

My predecessor in this job, Councillor Malcom Richards, had a meeting with Network Rail on 16 February this year.

Although there is no formal obligation or allocated budget at this time, the Council and Network Rail have both agreed to look into the feasibility of providing a replacement single span footbridge. Officers from our Highways and Transport Team are currently looking at wider pedestrian and cycle linkages to a single span footbridge, and how better to make this a well-used key gateway into Wokingham Town Centre. Officers are also investigating how best a single span footbridge could tie into the town centre regeneration works around the new multi-storey car park and that initial feasibility work is about to start.

Supplementary Question

Given that the Network Rail looks to perhaps finish this bridge by 2019 (it might start next year) do you have a timescale to actually come up with money to ensure that this project is delivered?

Supplementary Answer

It is at a very early stage and we are just getting into the feasibility study which should take about 2-3 months and then we have to do a benefit analysis assessment and then we come to the capital funding of it if we are successful getting through that stage. That requires us obviously to negotiate with different parts of the Council to see whether the money is available because, as you said in your question, it is not currently in the Capital budget. So that is where we are and that is where we are progressing.

6. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

6.1 Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Environment:

Question

Does an out of date/dated Minerals and Waste Local Plan have any impact on the ability of Wokingham Borough Council to effectively manage/control any current or future applications for Waste/Mineral extraction until, or when a new/up to date Minerals and Waste Local Plan has been put into place?

Answer

Whilst the current policy is dated it complies with our statutory duty and has posed no risk to the Council whilst other priority policy has been progressed successfully. Any current and future minerals applications will be robustly assessed in line with national planning policy, the saved policies within the current Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire (2001), and all material planning considerations.

Supplementary Question

This is the first time that I have been involved with waste so I am not familiar with this type of plan. I am familiar with other planning processes and what I am concerned about is there an equivalent in this process of what we have in normal planning; for example if we get stuffed with our 5 year land supply is there an equivalent in the waste and extraction local plan, in that if we haven't got enough of particular aggregates or something, that can cause us a problem? I am just trying to understand the analogies and planning processes between the two as I have not been involved with this particular type of planning application and that is what I am concerned about. So is there anything in that planning process that could cause us a problem?

Supplementary Answer

It was agreed that a written answer would be provided.

6.2 Prue Bray had asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question but as she was unable to attend the meeting the following written answer was provided:

Question

Why was the current Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan allowed to become so dated?

Answer

Our current Minerals Plan includes the Replacement Minerals Local Plan (RMLP) 1995 (alterations adopted 1997 and 2001) and the Waste Local Plan (WLP) for Berkshire 1998. Relevant policies in the Plans have been formally saved until they are replaced by national or local minerals and waste policies. A Berkshire wide Minerals and Waste Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State by the Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit but was withdrawn because the Planning Inspector had concerns about the 'soundness' of the evidence base; therefore the original policies still stand. Since then the priority of plan making has been on wider strategic policy in the form of the Core Strategy (adopted in 2010) and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan document (adopted in 2014). Once these documents were adopted attention was refocussed on negotiation with the other Berkshire authorities which led to progressing the current new Minerals and Waste Local Plan jointly with RBWM, Reading Borough Council and Bracknell Forest Council. Whilst the current policy is dated it complies with our statutory duty and has posed no risk to the Council whilst other priority policy has been progressed successfully.

7. COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES' BUSINESS

(Councillors David Lee and Stuart Munro declared personal interests in this item)

The Executive considered a report setting out the budget monitoring position for the Council Owned Companies for the month ending 31 March 2017 and an operation update for the period to 30 April 2017.

The Deputy Leader drew Members' attention to the consolidated results of Wokingham Housing Ltd which although they showed large losses this was due to the fact that the houses had not yet been built. Councillor Lee also highlighted the progress of the Phoenix Avenue project and reported that the first 22 houses had been handed over as complete and the bulk of those had already been let.

The Leader informed the meeting that the July report would contain proposals to change some of the non-Executive directors on the companies which would then need WBC Holdings Company Board approval.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 31 March 2017 be noted;
- 2) the operational update for the period to 30 April 2017 be noted.

8. 21ST CENTURY COUNCIL - UPDATE

The Executive considered a report setting out the progress over the last quarter of the 21st Century Council programme.

The Executive Member for Finance reported that the programme was in line with the plan and phase 1 would be going live in June. The original go-live date was May but a certain amount of slippage was always to be expected in such a major project.

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

9. REVENUE MONITORING 2016/17 - OUTTURN

The Executive considered a report setting out the outturn position of the revenue budget, which included a number of carry forward requests.

The Executive Member for Finance highlighted that the outturn position showed that the general fund was underspent leaving a balance of £9.2m, the Housing Revenue Account had an underspend giving rise to a balance of £5m and the Schools' Block by £0.5m. These figures were, of course, subject to confirmation from External Audit.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the outturn position of the revenue budget and the level of balances in respect of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Schools Block and the Authority's investment portfolio be noted;
- 2) the General Fund carry forward requests of £878k, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be agreed.

10. CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2016/17

The Executive considered a report setting out the outturn position for the capital budget, including a number of carry forwards.

The Executive Member for Finance highlighted that the total investment in capital projects was £78m; which was a growth of 59% from the previous year. Projects overall were delivered in line with the budget and the final outturn was an underspend of £3.8m.

Councillor Whittle explained that the carry forwards, totalling £1.1m out of a £153m budget was a very modest carry forward. He drew Members' attention to the projects that made up the total expenditure on capital projects for 2016/17 of £76.883m; which was the highest investment that the Council had made in any single year.

The Leader of Council was pleased to see so much investment in capital projects and particularly highlighted the provision of superfast broadband which was just about to move into its next phase which would deliver broadband to 99.5% of the Borough.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Capital Outturn and committed carry forwards (for 2016/17), as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- 2) the carry forwards for schemes which are awaiting contractual commitment (totalling £1.129m), as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved;
- 3) it be noted that the overall value of the 2017/18 capital programme has increased due to the receipt of ring fenced capital grant for Early Years in the sum of £387k.

11. PROPOSED SHARED EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICE

The Executive considered a report setting out options for the provision of Wokingham's emergency planning service. The options included joining a Berkshire wide shared service or continuing with the current shared service arrangement with Reading Borough Council (RBC).

The Executive Member for Finance informed the meeting that the Council currently had a shared service agreement with RBC. An opportunity had arisen to join a Berkshire wide scheme however as RBC had decided not to join this scheme, and Wokingham was happy with the current arrangements, it was therefore proposed to continue on the same basis with RBC to provide a shared emergency planning service for a period to May 2020.

Members noted that it would have cost £8k more to join the Berkshire wide joint service.

RESOLVED: That Wokingham Borough Council continue with its existing shared service for emergency planning arrangements with Reading Borough Council, with a continuation agreement up to May 2020.

12. CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION

The Executive considered a proposed Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan Issues and Options document for consultation. The Issues and Options document would consult on the vision and objectives, spatial strategy as well as other topic areas eg transportation of minerals, minerals demand etc.

The Deputy Executive Member for Environment advised Members that Bracknell Forest, Reading Borough Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham Borough Councils made up the Central and Eastern Berkshire authorities and were working in partnership to produce a joint minerals and waste plan which would guide minerals and waste decision making in the area up to 2036.

The Joint Minerals and Waste Plan would build upon existing adoptive minerals and waste plans for Berkshire and would improve and update existing policies and provide details of strategic sites.

Members noted that the issues and options consultation was the first stage in the plan preparation and would run for a six week period from 9 June-21 July 2017. The information obtained from the consultation would help shape the options for the plans, policies and site allocation going forward.

The Leader of Council urged the public to view the consultation documents and provide their comments.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the Issues and Options report be approved for consultation for a six week period running from 9 June – 21 July 2017 together with publishing supporting documents;
- 2) the Interim Director of Environment be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement to agree minor changes to the Central and Eastern Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Issues and Options stage and other supporting documents prior to consultation. (Any minor modifications would consist of non-material alterations such as rewording and correction of typing errors).

13. THE ACQUISITION OF LAND OR PROPERTY TO SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY

The Executive considered a report setting out proposals to acquire five parcels of land or property in order to facilitate delivery of Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) and major scheme infrastructure.

Members noted that a compulsory purchase order would not be utilised on any of the parcels of land or property.

RESOLVED that it be agreed, as set out in Part 2 of the report, the voluntary acquisition of:

- 1) land parcel 1;
- 2) land parcel 2;
- 3) land parcel 3;
- 4) land parcel 4;
- 5) land parcel 5.