

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2017 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.30 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Charlotte Haitham Taylor (Chairman), David Lee, Mark Ashwell, Norman Jorgensen, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Stuart Munro and Simon Weeks

Other Councillors Present

Andy Croy
Richard Dolinski
Lindsay Ferris
Michael Firmager
Pauline Jorgensen
Charles Margetts
Philip Mirfin
Malcolm Richards
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Chris Smith

64. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Chris Bowring and Oliver Whittle.

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

65. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 October 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Norman Jorgensen declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 65 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.

Councillors David Lee and Stuart Munro declared personal interests in Agenda Item 65 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that they were paid Non-Executive Directors of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillors Lee and Munro remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor Charles Margetts declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 65 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that he was a paid Non-Executive Director of Optalis. Councillor Margetts remained in the meeting during discussions but in accordance with legislation did not vote on the matter.

67. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

67.1 Alexandra Fraser asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:

Question

The plans for carnival leisure have been approved with no provision for a children's splash pool and instead a moveable floor. How are the Council and its new contract operator proposing to manage the swimming needs during high times such as weekends when there are families with toddlers and older children?

Answer

Each of the operators on the shortlist of those we are considering to run the leisure centres is a market leader in managing local authority leisure and sports facilities so they have experience of balancing the demands on use of multiple pools. We will work with them with the aim of optimising the timetabling of the sessions in the two pools.

Our aim clearly is to offer a range of opportunities including for families with small children. We and the Leisure Operator will wish to maximise the use of the facilities and the range of user groups.

The teaching pool will have a moveable floor so that the depth of the pool can be altered from full depth to zero depth and many points in between. It can therefore cater for a very wide range of needs. The floor depth will be adjusted in around 5 minutes so this can be done between sessions such that a toddler group could be enjoying the pool a few minutes after an adult session has finished and vice versa; so quite flexible I think.

Supplementary Question:

So you have got a weekend, you have got parents with their 6 year old, their 10 year old and their 3 year old – how do you do that? How are you going to when you have that prime time at the weekends when families have their leisure time together how will you manage that?

Supplementary Answer:

There will be a full depth pool which will obviously be available all the time and in the other pool you can adjust the depth so that different users can use it at different times. If it is a peak time, and it looks from the figures that we have that the peak time in the whole week is in the middle of the day on a Sunday, may be that the sessions there where the pool depth is low so that the toddler groups can use it at that time. That is the peak time during the week.

All of that needs to be reviewed and clearly the leisure operator will want to maximise the use of the facility so we just need to speak to people and find out when the demand is. We have done surveys so we know when demand for the current facility is.

67.2 Indy Sindhu asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:

Question

Over 700 residents have signed a petition to have our children's beach pool yet the plans have been approved and haven't included an amendment taking into consideration what the community has requested. Why have the Council chosen to ignore the concerns of a growing section of our community?

Answer

We are not ignoring the concerns of those who have signed the petition but we aim to provide a balanced range of facilities for our 165,000 residents across the Borough. It is also our aim to have these facilities be self-financing, in that the user fees will pay for the capital and the running costs. So far I have not seen a business case for a beach pool at Carnival Pool that would pay back the investment in it. The forecast number of users is too low to allow it to pay for itself in that way.

The new Carnival Pool complex will include quite a number of facilities there will be a:

- 4 court sports hall with 400 seats for cultural events;
- 25m x 6 lane swimming pool;
- teaching pool with moveable floor that we have just spoken about;
- 100 station gym;
- Studio;
- Café; and
- elsewhere in the building there will be a library.

In addition, across the Borough, during the next year we will open new facilities at Ryeish Green and Arborfield plus a new artificial pitch at Emmbrook School. We recently opened an artificial pitch at Arborfield and tennis courts and pavilion at Cantley Park. We also plan to build a complete new leisure centre at Bulmershe in Woodley. So at the moment our approved capital expenditure on leisure facilities is around £30 million; so we are spreading it across the Borough.

At the same time, our neighbour, Reading Borough Council appears to have lost control of its finances and it is closing facilities; it is not opening them.

We have catered for small children splashing around in water by the proposed inclusion of the learner pool which we have just talked about. Just to repeat it will have a floor which can be moved, thus the depth of water can be adjusted so at peak times we have it as a toddlers' splash pool and then at other times it can be used for other activities.

So it is clearly good to get youngsters in the habit of coming to leisure centres and using the pools so we hope that that facility will be used in that way and that encourages people obviously in the long term to live a healthy lifestyle which is to be encouraged.

At the moment unfortunately there does not appear to be sufficient demand to make a beach pool a high priority in our spending plans.

Supplementary Question:

So you mentioned that there was not a business case that was in support of keeping the Carnival Pool with the splash pool in tact however, and I am quoting here from the National Policy Planning Framework, they say that the new leisure facilities should not be moved unless the replacement is an improvement on existing facilities or at least an equivalent. Clearly taking something away such as a splash pool and not replacing it is in contravention of this so how have you taken the National Policy Planning Framework, and this sentence in particular, into account?

Supplementary Answer:

A couple of points. Firstly, although the beach pool will not be there there will be the teaching pool which will have a moveable floor so the depth of water can be adjusted so

that a full range of activities can happen in that pool. So we are not losing, in fact we are gaining, a facility that can be more widely used. These new facilities are very flexible with their use to allow disabled people to use the facility as well. I have been and seen the one at Hart and it is quite impressive. These sort of facilities are really nice.

In terms of the usage we have surveyed the usage of the current facility over the last week or so and I was quite surprised actually at the outcome of that. In the period Monday to Friday last week there was less than 20 people used that facility on any one day. The numbers were counted every half an hour during the whole day so there is probably even some double counting if people were in there for more than half an hour they would be counted twice. That is children and adults. So that is less than 20 people. It peaked on a Sunday and there were 119 on Sunday but again there will be some double counting and that includes adults. So the usage, and if you multiply up the fees that generates, you can very easily see that the facility just wouldn't pay for itself I am afraid.

So unless you can convince the Council that hundreds more people are going to be using such a facility then I think it is unlikely that we would be looking to build such a thing.

So just to repeat the teaching pool will provide the flexibility for all age groups and abilities to use swimming pools but I do not see the case at the moment for adding a beach pool to the new facility I am afraid. I would like to be able to but I do not see the case for it at the moment.

68. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

68.1 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey had asked the Executive Member for Finance the following question which was answered in his absence by the Deputy Executive Member for Finance in his absence:

Question

What are you doing to stop your Conservative colleagues in Government imposing a negative support grant on WBC especially since the chair of the Tory constituency is a WBC Councillor?

Answer

The fundamentals of the current funding formula that distributes available resources across Local Authorities has been in place for many years and has been presided over by all three of the main national Political parties.

Our Executive Member for Finance at the time, Anthony Pollock and the Leader of the Council at the time, Keith Baker, supported by our Chief Finance Officer, were extremely successful in working with our local Conservative MPs to get a better deal for Wokingham, when the recent 4 year national finance settlement was announced in 2016. Negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG) is in essence a charge on this Council's business rates and I think we all have to ask ourselves – why are we facing this? We have been efficient as a Council; we have got better value for our residents basically by cutting back on unnecessary costs. Other Councils though have refused to become more efficient and continue to waste residents' money. Once again a Conservative Government is trying to clear up the mess left by others.

We see negative RSG as other councils punishing Wokingham for being good value for money. We have been working hard and trying to set out our case for keeping local taxes

local so that money raised by you and every other tax payer is spent on you. The new Leader and Deputy Leader have been meeting with senior members of the Government including a recent meeting with the Communities Secretary on 13 November where this issue was raised. The Local Government Association is also working on behalf of us and other councils to lobby for more devolved financial powers to raise more money locally.

I hope all political parties will support this approach as well as the various other initiatives we are taking to continue to try and get the best value for money to keep taxes as low as possible and to provide top class services for residents.

The Deputy Leader of Council stated:

There is a strange formula which was established under Labour, I believe, and that formula has never actually been changed. Under that formula Wokingham Borough residents are the richest this side of Gallifrey. That needs to be looked at and various governments of all persuasions, including the coalition government, have threatened to do that but they still haven't done it. The one thing that we have done apart from what Charles has mentioned is we asked our External Auditor to actually, instead of just simply saying that we were good at value for money, to explain back to the Council what that meant. So, for example, if we are particularly good at one area where we have say 10 staff to do the job which requires another area 20 staff or vice versa that those points are highlighted and those figures are given to the other authorities and to ourselves to say you could be better at this please speak to authority x, y or z. In that respect I would appreciate the assistance and help of all political parties to actually start that process going.

As Charles has said Charlotte and I had a meeting with the Secretary of State and one of the main items we talked about was the level of our Revenue Support Grant and just in case you are not aware we are the lowest funded authority in the country and just in case you only think that is in the Revenue Support Grant it is not. It is also on the amount that we will be keeping out of the rates that we collect from businesses. We are one of the bottom four in education, social care and also another interesting one the lowest on GP funding. All of these points we are tackling but I think Charles indicated very clearly because it is such an efficient authority we still retain weekly bin collections etc, we are building country parks all over the place. Because of that governments of all persuasions seem to think that we can carry on without that assistance but we are not prepared to do it anymore and with your help we can get it changed but we have to help other authorities.

Supplementary Question:

What are you doing to make Mr Redwood get off his xenophobic obsession and actually help the local residents by getting us a decent support grant?

Supplementary Answer provided by the Deputy Leader of Council:

It was our esteemed MP, John Redwood, who arranged and got us that meeting with Sajid Javid where we not only talked about the bad level of funding we got but in addition to that the truly awful 5 year land supply issue that you are well aware.

The Leader of Council stated:

It was also John Redwood who helped us with the 4 year settlement as well so perhaps you should retract your statement.

The Deputy Executive Member for Finance stated:

On top of the lobbying work we have been doing we have also been taking steps independently to try to make the Authority more self-sufficient financially such as the

Property Investment Strategy that was discussed at Council last week, the Business Rates Pilot which we are going to talk about later, and the income from the regeneration of the town centre. These are all things that we are working on on top of this to try and improve the situation.

68.2 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

It has become apparent that during many of the projects that Wokingham Borough Council is involved in that the needs of disabled residents are being overlooked or side-lined. It is normal for Councils to consult with disability groups and to complete Equality Impact Assessments during the design phases. This should be done in all service areas, including highways, planning, property services etc.

What procedures and processes are in place within Wokingham Borough Council to ensure that these consultations occur and that it meets its obligations under the Equality Act in all of the projects and services that the Council is involved in?

Answer

The Executive, as you may be aware, approved the Council's Equality Policy in March 2017; this may be just before you joined the Council. This is underpinned by guidance and an Equality Impact Assessment template. This is supported by e-learning modules for all staff and specific e-learning for managers as well. Consultation with residents takes place in line with the statutory requirements of the item being considered.

The Council works within an approved Council Plan that includes its vision and principles that translate into service plans and individual team and personal development targets and this includes the underpinning principle; to look after the vulnerable. This should therefore be embedded in everything that we do. The Council Plan is in the process of being refreshed at the moment as well.

Following implementation of phase 1 of the 21st Century Council the formation of a Strategy and Commissioning Team will also help ensure a consistent and joined up approach to both Equality Impact Assessments and consultation. These changes will enable the Council to further enhance its approach to community engagement and particularly to disability groups.

Supplementary Question:

We have to have due regard to the needs of the advanced equality opportunities within the Equalities Act and we are required to promote support for people with particular disabilities in this instance. I found with the Carnival Pool there were a lot of things missed. Although people talked about the British Standard I would put a couple of seats in. They didn't look at automated doors, they didn't look at seating that is outside in the rain. These are modern buildings, these are new buildings and I don't understand why we are not meeting the standards that are required as part of the Code of Practice.

My concern is what are we going to do to fix them and how are we going to make sure that this thing is better done with Bulmershe pool?

Supplementary Answer:

In terms of Bulmershe pool there will be an assessment done at the appropriate time. In fact for the Carnival Pool I have the Equality Impact Assessment here and I am happy to take away some of the suggestions of what you think is missing but there are also a number of things which have been taken into consideration which I hope you would feel

are appropriate and meet the needs of the users. I am happy to read out some of the points and those are: the public spaces have been designed to optimise inclusivity and accessibility and those include things like the changing rooms; accessible toilets; pool access pods; generous corridor sizes and lobby spaces; two vertical circulation lifts etc. I know that you raised some issues about the car parking and that has been raised to Councillor Bowring at the Council meeting and there are conversations going back and forth about that. So those are the particular items that Councillor Bowring is addressing at the moment.

As you say if there are particular items eg doors etc like that that we can address then perhaps we can organise a meeting to look at the specific items that you think we have missed and we can take those back and have a look at them. I would be very interested to hear what you think.

68.3 Angus Ross had asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question. As Councillor Ross was unable to attend the meeting the following written response was provided to him:

Question

Can the Executive Member for Environment outline the benefits to residents that will arise from the new Leisure Centres' Contract from May next year?

Answer

The Council's leisure centres provide access to leisure activities which support the health and wellbeing agenda across the Borough. The current leisure contract also delivers a significant financial benefit to the Council.

The new leisure contract will give an additional financial return to the Council and the following benefits:-

- A new Leisure Operator – one of the leading operators in the leisure industry
- New facilities – Arborfield and Ryeish Green, two new builds (Bulmershe and Carnival Pool)
- Bulmershe – Six lane pool, teaching pool with movable floor to vary the depth of the pool, 4 court sports hall, 2 studios, café area and a 75 station gym studio
- Carnival Pool – Six lane pool, teaching pool with movable floor, 100 station gym, long term conditions gym, 4 court sports hall with 400 seats for cultural events
- Additional capital investment by the Leisure Operator in all six leisure centres
- Enhanced facilities with all new state of the art gym equipment
- More opportunities for members of the public to access high quality facilities
- Aiming for increased Public Health outcomes including;
 - More members of public physically active
 - Reduction in cancers and cardiovascular disease
 - Reductions in falls
 - Reduction in obesity child and adults
 - Reduction in isolation
 - Increase health and wellbeing in the workforce (including WBC).

In summary, this is a fantastic outcome for the residents of Wokingham Borough and I would like to thank all those who have worked on this project to get us to this stage.

68.4 Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:

Question

I like many Councillors have been approached by a number of local residents concerned about the significant increase in Dog Boarding Licence Fees for 2018 where the current figure of £173 p.a. is projected to increase to £371 p.a.

I have been through the tables contained under Agenda Item 66 and it appears to be missing.

Could the Exec Member responsible for this area kindly explain how they can justify such a massive increase (114%)?

Answer:

This issue was first brought to my attention a couple of weeks ago by Councillors Richard Dolinski and Alison Swaddle.

I agree with you that the increase is large and therefore difficult for dog boarders to accommodate so I asked for our charging to be reviewed.

The increase in the Dog Boarding licence application fee was agreed, and I have been trying to track which meeting agreed it and I have been told this evening it was the Executive in November 2016 that approved it as part of the budget setting process for 2017/18.

The price reflects the cost of carrying out the service and hence for there to be a lower price and still recover costs, the amount of work would have to decrease; so we would have to do less.

Options, including this, are being considered and we plan to bring forward a proposal early in the New Year. Whilst this issue is being considered, the Council will not take enforcement action against any person who has not renewed their licence.

Supplementary Question:

I think there is some movement there. I think the issue is that a lot of the dog boarders are semi-retired or retired people who look after the odd dog every now and then and they are not a professional business as such. The message I have received from three or four people who have contacted me is that with such a high fee some have even started to say that they will not do it. But I think it is encouraging that if you can get a fee down to what it was before or close to it I think that might help. So the issue is are you able to differentiate between what I would call a professional business where I can see there being a lot of activity to somewhere where you have got a small business which is looking after dogs on a sort of irregular basis because it is the smaller that is being impacted by this increase?

Supplementary Answer:

That is an interesting idea and is worthy of having a look at as well. Something like £371 if you are charging £10 a day for a dog or whatever it takes quite a long time to recoup that fee. So it is quite a price. The flip side of that, of course, is the whole point of licencing is to make sure that things are done properly eg cut down the spread of disease in the animal population so it is a balance but we are looking at it and will certainly take your views into account and come back with something probably early in the new year that we can all have a look at.

68.5 Chris Smith asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:

Question

I noticed that this Executive meeting will discuss rebuilding Bulmershe Leisure Centre, spending £14.5m and £750k on new 3G pitches at Emmbrook. Can you let me know what capital spending has occurred or is planned for Loddon Valley Leisure Centre?

Answer

Loddon Valley Leisure Centre is in good condition a condition survey was done not so long ago so that is good news so there is no major works foreseen to the fabric of the building.

Spaces within the building have been adapted over the last few years to meet the changing needs and several more are planned. The detail of this will be agreed with the new leisure operator who will be on site from 1st May 2018. Negotiations with the leisure contract are at a fairly sensitive stage so there is, I am afraid, a limit to what I can say in public at the moment. What I can do is give you a more detailed confidential response but I can assure you that whichever of the leisure operators we choose we have plans for further improvements to the Loddon Valley Leisure Centre.

One of the examples of a thing that has been done in the last couple of years is the refurbishment of the courts at Chalfont Park, where the courts were resurfaced, new fencing, upgraded lighting was put in so they could be used for netball and other activities and the tennis courts on site next to the leisure centre have also been improved.

So there are plans and the detail will come out in the public next year. I am happy to give you confidential information on that.

69. SHAREHOLDERS' REPORT

(Councillors David Lee, Norman Jorgensen, Charles Margetts and Stuart Munro declared personal interests in this item)

The Executive considered a report which provided the budget monitoring position of the Council Owned Companies and an operational update for the period ending 30 September 2017.

The Deputy Executive Member for Finance presented the report and highlighted a number of areas including the financial performance of the companies and the success of the housing subsidiaries which had been set up to provide affordable housing across the Borough and generate a financial return for the Council. Councillor Margetts advised that the housing bodies were now well established and this year alone Wokingham Housing Ltd had handed over 125 homes to its sister companies Loddon Homes and Berry Brook Homes and would generate a profit of £1.1m. Next year 60 homes at a profit just short of £1m.

Councillor McGhee-Sumner asked whether there had been any impact following the slight delay of handing over the final houses. Councillor Margetts confirmed that there had been no impact as the additional cost had been reclaimed from the developers as per the contract. It was also confirmed that 58 people had so far moved into Phoenix Avenue.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 30 September 2017 be noted;

2) the operational update for the period to 30 September 2017 be noted.

70. FEES AND CHARGES

The Executive considered a report setting out the proposed schedule of fees and charges which were in the main to be enacted from 1 December 2017. Changes to People's Services Sports and Housing charges would come into effect from 1 January 2018 and 1 April 2018 respectively.

The Deputy Executive Member for Finance advised Members that most of the charges had increased by inflation and the increases were in line with RPI at July 2017. Additionally the charges had been benchmarked against other authorities and realigned where appropriate. Councillor Margetts stated that given the current financial climate the increases were necessary as they would generate an additional £60k per year for the council tax payer.

Following a query Councillor Margetts confirmed that the proposed estates winding up fees, which were currently charged on an hourly basis, were intended to have a clearer fixed charge which would be more transparent and easier to follow. This charge was also in accordance with charges made by other local authorities.

With regard to the planning application fees, and the fact that they were capped at 51 units, Councillor Ashwell queried whether this was sufficient. The Executive Member for Planning stated that he would look into this matter as there may be a possibility of introducing higher bands. Councillor Weeks also believed that for very large applications bespoke fees were agreed because of the sheer scale and considerable time that could be spent on the pre-application work that was required.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix A to the report, to be effective from the dates listed on the schedule, be approved.

71. EMMBROOK SCHOOL 3G PITCH

The Executive considered proposals for the release of £375k from S106 funds to go forward as the amount for 50% match funding required by the Football Foundation in order to fund a 3G pitch sited at Emmbrook School.

The meeting was advised by the Executive Member for Environment that the School would have prime use of the pitch during school hours and at evening and weekends it would be available for the wider community. The pitch would be managed by the operator of all the leisure facilities which should hopefully improve usage and the bookings would be straightforward and the objective would be to book through a centralised system. The Council would also be setting aside a sum of money each year which would then be used for future resurfacing work.

Councillor Ashwell asked that interested parties eg football clubs be involved at an early stage in the planning process to ensure that what was proposed was appropriate for players' needs.

With regard to the fluvial flooding risk, as mentioned in the report, Councillor Jorgensen confirmed that the relevant Officers were looking into the matter and would be working with the relevant Officers. It was hoped that whilst the pitch was being installed there could be an opportunity to help with flood alleviation in that area in general.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) £375k be released from S106 funds, as the amount for the 50% match funding required by the Football Foundation;
- 2) it be noted that the release of the money will be subject to receipt of the contribution of £375k from the Football Foundation and subject to planning permission.

72. INSURANCE PROCUREMENT: RETENDER

The Executive considered a report setting out the proposed procurement process for the retender of the Council's insurance programme.

The Deputy Executive Member for Finance informed the meeting that this was a retender of a 7 year contract which would expire in June 2018. The Council was responsible for contents and assets of over £1bn and the intention was to go out to the market using the Council's brokers and seek the most cost effective solution for the tax payer.

Given the size of the account Councillor McGhee-Sumner asked whether the Council had considered using more than one broker and also whether cyber cover was in place. Councillor Margetts confirmed that Officers had been asked to consider using more than one broker as part of the tender process. With regard to cyber cover Councillor Margetts confirmed that he would provide a response outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the procurement (by way of Open Procedure tender) of the Council's insurance cover(s) be approved;
- 2) the design of the contract specification be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance;
- 3) the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, be delegated authority to award the contract(s) to the successful bidder(s) following completion of the evaluation process.

73. BERKSHIRE BUSINESS RATES PILOT

The Executive considered a report setting out proposed membership of the Berkshire Business Rates Pilot involving all six Berkshire Unitary Authorities.

Members were informed by the Deputy Executive Member for Finance that if the bid to be included in the pilot was successful the potential financial gain to the Council would be £1m business rate retention as well as a £25m strategic investment across Berkshire which would benefit the regional economy on a wider scale.

Councillor Lee pointed out that the Reading Mass Rapid Transport Network would actually run all the way from Coppid Beach to Reading Station. He also highlighted a £3m grant that had recently been received towards improving Winnersh Station.

RESOLVED: That the application for 100% business rates pilot in 2018/19, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted and supported.

74. LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

The Executive considered a report relating to the appointment of a contractor to manage the Council's leisure centres. The current contract would expire on 30 April 2018.

The Executive Member for Environment advised that the current contract delivered an income to the Council of about £680k per annum and the new contract would provide an additional £200k per annum. Councillor Jorgensen highlighted the facilities that the new leisure contract would cover which included two additional facilities: Arborfield and Ryeish Green leisure centres as well as additional capital investment in all six leisure centres and two new builds at Bulmershe and Carnival Pool.

Councillor Jorgensen highlighted the facilities that would be available at the new Arborfield leisure centre which included an 8 court sports hall, 2 dance studios, climbing wall and outdoor tennis and netball courts. Councillor Weeks felt that residents in the south east area of the Borough would benefit considerably from the new facility as previously they had always had to travel to St Crispins to use a leisure centre.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the recommended new leisure operator, as set out in the Part 2 sheets, as well as the financial impact of this be noted. The Leisure Operator will be officially informed after 1 December 2017;
- 2) the establishment of an equalisation fund to smooth the management fee income over the life of the contract be noted.

75. BULMERSHE NEW BUILD

The Executive considered a report setting out a range of options for the future provision of leisure facilities at Bulmershe.

The Executive Member for Environment advised that the current building was tired and dilapidated and the cost of refurbishing it would be very high. In addition the current facility had been run at a loss for many years and there was little prospect of the current facility paying its way. Councillor Jorgensen highlighted the options that had been considered, as set out in the report, and recommended that Option E, which would provide a considerably enhanced offering at a cost of £14.5m be taken forward. It was noted that Option E would provide: a newly built leisure centre with a four badminton court sports hall; a 25m x six lane swimming pool; a 75 station gym; two studios, a cafe and a teaching pool with movable floor. The difference in the facilities currently offered to those that would be offered in the new facility was also highlighted. The Council would also be entering into a surplus share arrangement which would mean that any additional operating surpluses over and above those projected would be shared between the Council and the leisure operator.

It was noted that Bulmershe School would use some of the facilities at times during the school day and there would be separate changing rooms for the pupils and the general public.

Members were concerned that both Bulmershe and Carnival Pool might be closed at the same time. Councillor Jorgensen confirmed that Bulmershe would be closed, demolished and rebuilt and once that had been finished then Carnival Pool would be closed and

rebuilt. The intention was that only one facility would be closed at a time and people would be signposted to the other facility.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) having considered the range of options for the future provision of Leisure facilities at Bulmershe, the following option be approved:

Option E to consist of: A newly built leisure centre with a 4 badminton court sports hall; 25m x 6 lane swimming pool; a 75 Station gym; and 2 Studios, teaching pool with movable floor and Café;

- 2) authority be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services and Executive Member for Environment, Sports, Environmental Health, Leisure and Libraries to approve the detailed options for the scheme;
- 3) an additional Capital budget of £4.54 million be approved;
- 4) it be noted that the revenue cost of all borrowing (including the additional £4.54m) will be funded by the income generated by the facility.

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

The Executive considered a report relating to the acquisition of land or property in order to facilitate delivery of Strategic Development Locations and major scheme infrastructure.

Members were advised by the Executive Member for Strategic Highways and Planning that the proposal was to acquire two small parcels of land, as set out in the Part 2 sheets in the report, to facilitate the Winnersh Relief Road and the Northern Relief Road.

Councillor Lee highlighted that currently the Executive had to approve all land and property acquisitions relating to SDL and major scheme infrastructure prior to final purchase completion and often there were very small items that had to be purchased and he felt it was unnecessary for such items to have to go through the Executive process which would slow down any such acquisitions. The Leader of Council requested that the Constitution Review Working Group be asked to review this matter and come forward with a recommendation about what sum would be an appropriate amount.

RESOLVED: That as set out in Part 2 of the report the voluntary acquisition of land parcels, References 1 and 2, be agreed.