



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in Council Chamber
- Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN on
THURSDAY 21 MARCH 2019 AT 7.30 PM

Heather Thwaites

Heather Thwaites
Interim Chief Executive
Published on 13 March 2019

This meeting will be filmed for inclusion on the Council's website.

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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, an even better place to do business

Our Priorities

Improve educational attainment and focus on every child achieving their potential

Invest in regenerating towns and villages, support social and economic prosperity, whilst encouraging business growth

Ensure strong sustainable communities that are vibrant and supported by well designed development

Tackle traffic congestion in specific areas of the Borough

Improve the customer experience when accessing Council services

The Underpinning Principles

Offer excellent value for your Council Tax

Provide affordable homes

Look after the vulnerable

Improve health, wellbeing and quality of life

Maintain and improve the waste collection, recycling and fuel efficiency

Deliver quality in all that we do

To: The Members of Wokingham Borough Council

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
94.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence	
95.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 21 February 2019.	15 - 32
96.		DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest	
97.		MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive any announcements by the Mayor	
98.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of the Council Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Council or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
98.1	None Specific	David Bragg has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question: Question 19 Bus Service The latest Labour Newsletter distributed in my ward clearly states, "The service was axed by the Tories in 2017". My understanding was that the provider, Reading Buses which is owned by Labour controlled Reading Borough Council, asked for a 100% increase in the subsidy paid by Wokingham Borough from the existing six-figure sum already paid to them. WBC then offered them a 50% increase on that six-figure sum and Reading Buses still went ahead and changed the route. To most residents interpreting this	

huge increase in the subsidy as axing the service would be considered to be extremely misleading.

Can you confirm my understanding is correct and agree with me that residents deserve better from our politicians?

98.2 None Specific

Philip Meadowcroft has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

At the last meeting on February 21, Councillor McGhee-Sumner, said he could not deal with my question because the transcript had not been published of WBC's Application to the Court of Appeal for Leave to Appeal the decision at Reading Crown Court in respect of WBC's criminal prosecution of numerous defendants associated with Hare Hatch Sheeplands.

The transcript has now been published and there has been a reasonable amount of time for it to be properly digested and evaluated and I now request an answer to the question I originally raised.

To remind you of my question: will you please give urgent consideration to suspending from office all those Members and Officials named and shamed by the Court of Appeal for a series of actions and events of unacceptable culture and practice - such suspensions could only be lifted after the completion of an internal inquiry whose unredacted report is openly published and fully debated by a Full Council Meeting with contributions from WBC council taxpayers? It is a simple choice and crucial to your standing as a respected and credible Leader of WBC

98.3 Winnersh

Paul Fishwick has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Lamp column number 55 Bearwood Road, Sindlesham was knocked down in a vehicle accident on Monday 14th January 2019. The same evening street lights numbers 56, 57 and 58 had also stopped working, which placed a large section of Bearwood Road in darkness. Since then nothing has been done by Wokingham Borough Council.

The residents and travelling public have now endured 9 weeks of complete darkness. How much longer must they wait until the street lighting will be

operational again?

98.4 None Specific

Robert Tuck has asked the Executive Member for Finance, HR and Corporate Resources the following question:

Question

Page 65 of the Medium Term Financial plan approved in February shows new income generation of £150,000 in 2019/20, £850,000 in 2020/21 and £1,350,000 in 2021/22 arising from the purchase of commercial assets. The Council set up a property investment fund of £100 million, and page 80 of the Medium Term Financial Plan shows that it is planned to invest £55 million in such property in 2019/20, which coupled with the money already spent indicates that the whole £100 million is planned to be spent by the end of the next financial year.

When I do the maths, this new income on new spending is a return of 0.2% in the first year, 1.1% in the second year, rising to a maximum of 1.8% in the third year. The current inflation rate is 2.5% so, even at its best, the return is less than inflation, leading to the conclusion that this is a bad investment.

It is possible for ordinary people to get a more-or-less risk-free rate from banks of around 1.5%. However, commercial property investing is not risk free so one would expect a much higher return for the risk of the venture. This evidence, too, points toward this being a bad investment.

How can the Council justify investing in risky commercial property with such a poor return, at a time when all the advice seems to be that the high street retail is very risky?

98.5 Shinfield South

Jim Frewin has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Leisure and Libraries the following question:

Question

The National guidance for Countryside hedgerows: protection and management clearly states that a hedgerow is deemed to be protected if it meets any of a number of criteria. We understand the field South of Cutbush Lane, Shinfield meets the criteria below and therefore should have been seen as protected. This National guidance also states the bird nesting period to be between 1 March and 31 August. As this year has enjoyed a record breaking warm Feb nesting is

highly likely to have started much earlier. Can the Council please explain what actions they are undertaking with the landowner who has not only destroyed the protected hedgerows knowingly in the nesting season but has also removed approximately 500 trees, some of which had been there for over 30 years?

From Countryside hedgerows: protection and management

A hedgerow is a boundary line of bushes which can include trees and is protected if it's:

- more than 20m long with gaps of 20m or less in its length
- less than 20m long, but meets another hedge at each end
- any stretch within the above
- A hedgerow is protected if it's on or next to:
- land used for agriculture or forestry

A hedgerow is important (and is protected) if it's at least 30 years old and meets at least one of these criteria:

- is part of a field system or looks to be related to any building or other feature associated with the field system that existed before the Inclosure Acts (that is before 1845).

98.6 None Specific

Rachel Bishop-Firth has asked the Executive Member for Finance, HR and Corporate Resources the following question:

Question

Page 17 of the Medium Term Financial plan (MTFP) states that 'the annual revenue costs of new borrowing is approximately 7% of the sum borrowed'. Between 2018/19 and 2021/22 the total amount of borrowing is expected to rise by £212 million to £539 million (page 78, MTFP). The revenue cost of the **rise** in borrowing will therefore be £15 million per year from 2021/22, while the revenue cost of **total** borrowing from 2022/23 will be £38 million.

Page 17 of the MTFP states that 'the financing costs of any new borrowing falls directly upon the council tax payer'. Page 33 of the MTFP shows that Council Tax Revenue is approximately £100 million each year. The new borrowing will therefore be equivalent to two years' council tax receipts and will add somewhere between 15% and 38% per year to the

burden of council tax payers.

Average wages in the next five years or so are expected to rise by between 2% and 3% per year. Does the council regard this increased annual burden, adding at best 15% and at worst 38%, to council tax bills by 2021/22 as evidence that its spending plans are '**affordable, prudent and sustainable**' as required by the MTFP, page 17?

98.7 None Specific

Maria Gee has asked the Executive Member for Finance, HR and Corporate Resources the following question:

Question

The maturity structure of external borrowing shown on page 78 of the Medium Term Financial Plan shows that the budgeted maturity of debt 2019/20 is as follows:

- Under 12 months 2%
- 12 months to 2 years 15%
- 2 years to 5 years 15%

Total schedule debt repayments in the next five years is therefore 32% of external borrowings.

On the same page the external borrowings 2019/20 are shown as £295 million. The debt repayment schedule would therefore indicate that some £94 million in debt repayments will need to be found over the next five years.

Can the Council please explain where the money for this repayment of £94 million over the next five years will come from?

98.8 South Lake

Beth Rowland has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Will the Executive Member for Highways please tell me what (on earth) persuaded him to agree to a 'pinch point' on Kingfisher Drive in Woodley. Residents have been complaining to me since it was installed and called it 'an act of madness.' Cars are parked for a considerable way along the highway either side of the pinch point meaning that cars travelling towards each other on the remaining carriageway have nowhere to go to allow one car to pass through the narrow gap.

For pupils walking to Highwood Primary school there is added danger as the sightlines are obscured by parked cars described by residents as an accident waiting to happen.

Please will you meet with me at the site to see what can be done to improve matters?

At the same time, we may be able to look at some potholes that are on the road damaging residents' cars.

98.9 None Specific

Lizzie Bishop has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Does the Council plan to raise car parking charges?

99.

PETITIONS

To receive any petitions which Members or members of the public wish to present.

100. None Specific

REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

33 - 40

To consider a report setting out the recommendations from the review of Polling Districts and Polling Places which was conducted by a cross-party group of Members.

RECOMMENDATION That Council:

- 1) agrees to retain the polling places for the polling districts listed in the attached schedule for elections from May 2020 onwards. This includes the two changes made for May 2019, whereby CAM1 has Charvil Village Hall and EFW and EGW have Aldryngton School designated;
- 2) agrees to change the polling district boundaries, as detailed below, (see maps for further clarity);
 - a) Shinfield North – Residents from Ducketts Mead to be moved from SAW2 to SAW1, so they can vote at Shinfield Player's Theatre;
 - b) Shinfield South – Residents from Church Lane and the northern end of Basingstoke Road and Hyde End Lane to be moved from SDW to SBW, allowing them to vote at Three Mile Cross Church;

- 3) agrees that, although no changes are to be made to the schools we currently use as polling places, we will continue to seek suitable alternatives as and when they become available.

101.	None Specific	<p>FREQUENCY OF REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME</p> <p>To consider a proposal by the Leader of Council to change the frequency of reviewing the Members' Allowances Scheme from annually to four-yearly.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) agree to move to four yearly reviews of the Members' Allowances Scheme and note that the next review would therefore take place late 2021/early 2022;2) ask the Constitution Review Working Group to consider what changes are required to the Constitution to affect this change.	41 - 44
102.	None Specific	<p>ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2018/19</p> <p>To receive a report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the work undertaken by the Management Committee and the associated Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the past year.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be noted.</p>	45 - 66
103.	None Specific	<p>AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19</p> <p>To receive a report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee on the work undertaken over the past year.</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee be noted.</p>	67 - 72
104.	None Specific	<p>STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19</p> <p>To receive a report from the Chairman of the Standards Committee on the work undertaken over the past year.</p>	73 - 80

RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Chairman of the Standards Committee be noted.

105. None Specific **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH WELLBEING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19** 81 - 94

To receive a report from the Chairman of the Wokingham Wellbeing Board on the work undertaken over the past year.

RECOMMENDATION: That the report from the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board be noted.

106. None Specific **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES** 95 - 136

To note those reports from Members on Outside Bodies as circulated in the agenda.

RECOMMENDATION: That the reports from Members appointed to Outside Bodies be noted.

107. **MEMBER QUESTION TIME**
To answer any member questions

A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions submitted under Notice

Any questions not dealt with within the allotted time will be dealt with in a written reply

107.1 None Specific Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

You have allocated money for roadworks only in Barkham, Earley, Twyford and Woodley. Why aren't the rest of WBC also getting these road repairs?

107.2 Remenham, Wargrave and Ruscombe Lindsay Ferris has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Having now had the chance to read the Court of Appeal decision between WBC and Hare Hatch Sheeplands representatives I have very serious concerns about how WBC has approached this case, specifically the reference to "abuse of process" contained in the legal decisions.

It would appear that WBC decided to prosecute the Hare Hatch Sheeplands representatives on 18th May 2015. Can you provide the total WBC costs

(including legal costs), plus broken down into WBC staff costs, legal costs and other) of pursuing the case against Hare Hatch Sheeplands since that date?

107.3 None Specific

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey has asked the Executive Member for Business, Economic Development and Strategic Planning the following question:

Question

We have recently seen the public information stating that WBC is proposing to spend up to £17.2 Million on a warehouse in Peterborough as one of its investment properties. It seems a little odd that this property is so far outside of the Wokingham Borough Council area and is valued at only £15.9 Million. Please can you explain how property investments are selected by the Property Investment Working Group and point in the direction of its terms of reference?

107.4 None Specific

Gary Cowan has asked the Executive Member for Business, Enforcement Development and Strategic Planning the following question:

Question

In a report in the Wokingham Paper on 15-12-16 at Wokingham Town Hall Wokingham's then Conservative Council Leader Councillor Keith Baker along with Councillor Chris Bowring and ex Councillor Mark Ashwell and Senior Council Officers announced that 4 local Councils Wokingham, West Berkshire, Reading and Bracknell are going to work together to deliver 65,165 houses over 20 years. Councillor Baker, amongst other comments, reportedly said that the four councils can achieve this huge task ahead.

My question is in the light of this Council's decision to move the New Local Plan public inquiry from this year to 2021, a year when there are no local elections, along with the interpretation of the 5 year land supply delivery policy, what are the risks in such planning?

107.5 Finchampstead North;
Finchampstead South

Sarah Kerr has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

On 28th September 2018, WBC received a joint letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government and the Department for Transport, written in response to the Department for Transport's publication of the *Inclusive Transport Strategy*. This publication asks local authorities to pause the development of shared space schemes whilst it

updates its guidance to ensure that road schemes like this meet the statutory requirements under the Equalities Act 2010. The Department for Transport did this due to long standing concerns raised by vulnerable road users, and is the consequence of the recommendations of a Parliamentary Select Committee published on 25th April 2017 that recommended a halt to shared space schemes that remove kerbs and signal-controlled crossings as well as a review by the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation *Review of Shared Spaces* published in April 2018.

With this in mind, I have concerns about the redevelopment of California Cross given that the design that went to public consultation at the end of last year has several shared space characteristics. To add to these concerns, the parking bays of the design are at an angle to the carriageway which is a major route, and means that vehicles leaving the parking bays would need to reverse onto the carriageway. At the 'Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee,' earlier this year, where the new marketplace was under review, one of the senior highways engineers stated that parking bays like this were too dangerous to implement where a vehicle reverses at an angle onto a busy carriageway. As the California Cross parking bay proposals appear to be similar, and given the request from the government to pause the development of shared space schemes, what is happening with regard to your plans for California Cross?

107.6 None Specific

Prue Bray has asked the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care the following question:

Question

The Director of Adult Social Services is a statutory post and appointments must be agreed by Full Council. In July last year, Council voted to have a joint Director of Adult Social Services with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for a 9 month trial, with effect from 1st August. That 9 month period expires at the end of April. What are the proposed arrangements for the post of Director of Adult Social Services after the end of April?

107.7 None Specific Ian Pittock has asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Will the Executive Member for Highways please update me on progress with implementing a system for recording Highways owned land across the Borough, which that can then be used to identify householder's encroachments onto Highways land?

108. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

A period of 20 minutes will be allowed for Members to ask questions in relation to the latest circulated volume of Minutes of Meetings and Ward Matters

109. STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

To receive any statements by the Leader of the Council, Executive Members and Deputy Executive Members.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.23 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 20 minutes, and no Member shall speak for more than 5 minutes

110. STATEMENTS FROM COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES

To receive any statements from Directors of Council Owned Companies.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.24 the total time allocated to this item shall not exceed 10 minutes, and no Director, except with the consent of Council, shall speak for more than 3 minutes.

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