

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 27 JUNE 2019 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.30 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: John Halsall (Chairman), Parry Batth, UllaKarin Clark, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Stuart Munro, Gregor Murray and Wayne Smith

Other Councillors Present

Rachel Bishop-Firth
Gary Cowan
Andy Croy
Lindsay Ferris
Paul Fishwick
Jim Frewin
Malcolm Richards
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Caroline Smith

10. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor John Kaiser.

Councillor Daniel Sargeant, Deputy Executive Member for Finance and Housing, attended the meeting on behalf of Councillor Kaiser. In accordance with legislation Councillor Sargeant could take part in any discussions but was not entitled to vote.

11. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 30 May 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader of Council.

Councillor Margetts queried whether the issues related to Northern House, as recently reported in the press, would affect the Schools' Block budget which was currently showing a predicted variance of £1.05m in the minutes? Councillor Clark advised that there were 70 children presently at Northern House of which 38 were Wokingham Borough children and as each placement cost around £30k therefore the Council's financial commitment to Northern House was around £1.2m.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Charlotte Haitham Taylor declared a personal interest in relation to Agenda Item 18, Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy, as she was a Non-Executive Director of the Local Enterprise Partnership. Councillor Haitham Taylor took part in discussions and voted on this matter.

13. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

13.1 Andrew Grimes asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

Shinfield Parish Council's Planning Committee of 6th June 2019 received an update on Planning Enforcement in the parish. The list consisted of 19 breaches. Of these two had reached the stage of a Planning Enforcement Notice being issued and one had been closed due to submission of a planning application. A review of the list demonstrated that all 19 breaches had been in existence for considerable periods of time, for example 84951 Derydene, or had not been inspected for a long period after a complaint had been made. In the case of enforcement item 1402 Mallards (Spencers' Wood Post Office) Enforcement was granted due to the applicants failed appeal and yet Officers continue to negotiate with the owner who is delaying conforming with the actual permission granted, with no relief for the neighbours in sight. These processes do not seem to result in any progress to rectify breaches of planning permissions.

Can the Executive confirm the Key Performance Indicators for managing Planning Enforcement issues and the criteria for screening out complaints?

Answer

The Council's Local Planning Enforcement Plan prioritises alleged breaches of planning control in "high", "medium" and "low" categories. The document can be found on the Council's website. The list of 18 cases (not 19 as stated) outstanding in Shinfield are all "medium" or "low" priority which means the complainant will get an initial response within 10 working days or 28 days respectively. In the listed cases this has occurred. The Parish Council has not contacted the Enforcement Team to our knowledge at any stage asking for an update on any particular case. The Council currently has 261 enforcement cases on hand, distributed mainly between three Officers. There is a target of 60% to close cases within 8 weeks and this is normally exceeded. There are those cases that end up with formal enforcement notices being served and they sometimes go to appeal or end up in court.

Now turning to the details in the question:

- On review of the list of 18 outstanding cases 3 or 5 may be closed as they have now been resolved.
- Derydene has been passed to the current Officer as unfortunately the previous Officer retired; probably fortunately for him. A site visit is planned but due to annual sickness this has not been undertaken. Looking at Google maps and aerial photographs it does appear that this site has existed for some time but we are taking further action on that.
- Item 1402 Mallards enforcement notice. Having looked at that last week and trying to get a better understanding of it myself, and the local Councillor Councillor Munro, spent most of yesterday morning with residents from both sides and the owner of the property. This is quite a complex case and I do not think even in my working life I have ever seen anything as complex as this case. I genuinely think that we can get a resolution having spoken to residents, as I said, on either side and the owner of the one-stop shop/post office/his own property. Myself and Councillor Munro have agreed to work with the owner of the property to the satisfaction of the residents either side to come to a resolution. But it is Andrew quite difficult and as I

said I have never seen anything like it and it is complex; but we will get a resolution that satisfies the residents.

Supplementary Question

You mentioned that you were not aware of the Parish Council commentary to the enforcement process. Would Officers be prepared to increase the rating through discussion with the Parish Council? You mentioned that we only had “medium” and “low” criticality items. 1402 strikes me as slightly worse than “medium” or “low” and perhaps did not bag the level of response that we needed.

So my supplementary question is would Officers be willing to review the criticality of these issues so that we can be assured that they are being treated with the appropriate level of performance?

Supplementary Answer

I am absolutely sure we will because Jason Varley, who heads up that Team, came with us yesterday to meet residents and he also understands the complex nature of this one. But as you know I absolutely thing if we are not working with the Parish Council it is going to make our life twice as hard. So yes.

14. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

14.1 Charles Margetts asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

Please can I ask the Exec Member for the Environment to update us on progress with the work on California Country Park?

Answer

Yes I can happily report that work is progressing fast on improving California Country Park, which provides excellent facilities for our residents, and the project is ready to open for the summer holidays. We have improved the car park layout, there is a series of pergolas providing all-weather outdoor seating under cover for the café, and there is a new road to provide better vehicle access. Also in the next phase we will have a new play area and additional toilets by 2020.

Supplementary Question

That is obviously all good news and can you tell us how this will be communicated to residents as we are now moving into the summer, the busiest months of the year, and people obviously want to use this community resource?

Supplementary Answer

I think if you open the Borough News, page 16, there is a mention in there but we will need to have more stuff on social media as well as press releases to keep everyone informed.

14.2 UllaKarin Clark asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency the following question:

Question

Forty councils across Britain, including Reading, have recently declared a Climate Emergency. Does your newly created role mean that Wokingham is joining with the other councils and their climate change initiatives? And if so, what can we expect in the coming months that will help stem the tide of climate change, and improve the environment of all our residents?

Answer

John Halsall started the process of declaring a climate emergency within his maiden speech as the Leader of Council on May 22nd. Following on from that speech the Council has been preparing a formal motion declaring a climate emergency which will be brought forward for a vote of the full Council at its next meeting on 19th July 2019. To support our ambition of being carbon neutral by 2030 over the next six months we will be working to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan. A key part of which will be to understand exactly what our current carbon footprint is and identify measures either to reduce or offset our carbon emissions. A partnership group will also be set up to help monitor the progress in achieving this ambition.

Within the Wokingham Borough Climate Emergency Action Plan, which is a bit of a mouthful and we may try and find a better name for it, we will look at all actions and opportunities available to help us reduce our carbon emissions and address climate change. I am particularly keen to ask our residents, our businesses, our charities and our schools for their thoughts and ideas on how we tackle this most important of issues. These will then be carefully considered and the most appropriate will be actioned.

I would also like to add that Wokingham Borough Council is already undertaking some bold and highly successful initiatives to help address climate change. The food waste recycling scheme has just collected its one thousandth ton. There are programmes in place for reducing the amount of energy that our own Council uses across its estates and we have many sustainable development and transport policies already in place. All of these coupled with the updated Local Plan, to include even more sustainability policies and targets, will help us to take steps to reduce our carbon emissions and reach our carbon neutral goal.

Although this is a global issue local actions do matter. Wokingham Borough Council has already demonstrated that we take our environmental responsibilities seriously and a climate emergency declaration is further proof of this. We call on all Members regardless of political party to vote to support this crucial motion and ask all residents to contribute as we work towards effecting positive change with this stretching ambitious but essential objective.

Supplementary Question

It is obviously very important that we communicate this to all our residents so what are you planning to ensure we reach them all?

Supplementary Answer

That is a very good follow-up question so David Allen and his team have already started working on some environmental communication initiatives. You will have already seen on things like social media a lot of communication around the food waste recycling and some

of the other initiatives that are going on. When we go to residents to ask them for their opinion we will be conducting, I do not like using the word survey but something along those lines, asking residents for their ideas and they will then be brought to a forum to be considered and we are hoping to partner with some of our esteemed newspapers to be able to communicate those surveys and those results and the actions that will be taken as a result.

14.3 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Could you please give me the reason for the delay of more than three years in the design of the Zebra crossing on Bearwood Rd and New Rd Winnersh (which has outside funding to pay for it) and the lowering of the speed limit to 30mph on Bearwood Rd required outside Bearwood Primary School?

Answer

I cannot speak for the last three years but recently as a result of the change of highways contract some non-urgent projects, such as the requested crossing, have not progressed as quickly as they should have done. Now the new contract is in place work is progressing in the design of the crossing. This will form part of a wider package of measures across the Borough and we will inform you of the programme of works as soon as possible; and that actually includes some double yellow lines that need to be replaced as well which are in plan now as well.

In respect of the requested reduced speed limit in Bearwood Road, our investigation has found that without traffic calming measures, the police will not enforce a reduced 30 mph speed limit. Such measures cannot be achieved within current regulations given the alignment and rural character of Bearwood Road, and the number and proximity of private driveways and only partial street lighting. While it is not possible to reduce the speed limit on the road the Council has undertaken measures such as junction warning signs, 'slow' road markings and the current 40mph speed limit which has been effective in reducing vehicle speeds. We have also been working with the Parish Council on speed surveys and we are also doing community speed watch initiatives with the Parish Council.

I do acknowledge residents' concerns and have asked Officers to make sure they continue to monitor the speeds on Bearwood Road and pursue measures should there be any deterioration in safety.

Supplementary Question

First of all 30mph is required for a zebra crossing. You must have a speed limit of 30mph or less on the road if you have a zebra crossing in the first place and second of all the police will not enforce a 40mph limit, they will not enforce a 50mph limit, and they will not enforce a 60mph limit. If you have seen a policeman doing that I would be very surprised. But my real question is: what is your opinion of a Government trying to reduce the cost of zebra crossings from between £50-70k as it is right now to a cost of around £300 by eliminating Belisha beacons?

Supplementary Answer

I have not come across that Government policy at all so I cannot really comment on it. The Borough Council has been quite assiduous in putting proper crossings with proper pelican controls in and that is all we can speak for. I cannot speak for the Government.

Regarding the speed limits I understand what you are saying about the police not enforcing quite a lot of speed limits. I drive up and down Bearwood Road a bit actually at school times and I must say that I have never managed to do more than 5mph during the school delivery time because of the amount of traffic and the fact that half the road is usually blocked off by parents dropping their kids off. So I understand what you are saying and will keep an eye on it and if I can think of anything else more to do to deal with speeding outside school drop-off time I will be happy to do it.

14.4 Jim Frewin asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

As a new member reading some of the excellent questions and answers from previous meetings has provided me with a valued source of information to help me understand what WBC are doing across a range of issues. However as soon as it becomes a happy to talk after, happy to give further details, happy to look into this, happy to share later, happy to have a conversation, it becomes a one to one conversation and the visibility of answers, ideas, options, actions and follow ups are lost to the wider audience. This is mainly supplementary questions but not always. There have also been (rare) occasions where answers are subsequently proven to be factually incorrect and any challenge is difficult to see.

I believe there would be benefit to residents and members in a cross party review of how we manage questions, subsequent actions and any resultant challenges. Will the Executive support the setting up such a cross party working group to review this issue?

Answer

I could not agree more. We have a body which is called the Constitution Review Working Group which is a cross-party Group and I propose to put your question to them to see whether the Constitution can be amended to include that and you are very welcome to attend that meeting.

14.5 Caroline Smith asked the Executive Member for Climate Emergency the following question:

Question

Do we have a planning policy concerning building a specific percentage of carbon neutral homes in any new development and if not when will we have such a policy and what percentage will it be?

(Where the Zero Carbon Hub website defines the three core requirements as:

1. The fabric performance must, at a minimum, comply with the defined standard known as the Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard (FEES) and
2. Any CO2 emissions that remain after consideration of heating, cooling, fixed lighting and ventilation, must be less than or equal to the Carbon Compliance limit established for zero carbon homes, and
3. Any remaining CO2 emissions, from regulated energy sources (after requirements 1 and 2 have been met), must be reduced to zero)

Answer

The good news is that we have already got some policies in place that do make a requirement on development proposals around environmental issues. Our Policy CP1, which was part of our 2010 Core Strategy, already states in paragraph 12 that new development must:

“Contribute towards the goal of reaching zero-carbon developments as soon as possible by:

- a) Including appropriate on-site renewable energy features; and*
- b) Minimising energy and water consumption by measures including the use of appropriate layout and orientation, building form, design and construction, and design to take account of microclimate so as to minimise carbon dioxide emissions through giving careful consideration to how all aspects of development form.”*

In addition we already have Policy CC04, the Sustainable Design and Construction Policy, and Policy CC05, the Renewable Energy and Decentralised Energy Networks of our Managing Development Delivery. These policies require residential and commercial development in the Borough to introduce measures to contribute towards carbon reduction.

The other piece of good news is that we are currently undergoing an update to our Local Plan and in that we have an opportunity to include specific carbon reduction and sustainability targets. This is currently being worked on by our Officers and will be put to consultation later in this autumn. We welcome any ideas or initiatives that help us to achieve our objective of being carbon neutral by 2030. Clearly housing and housing development is going to be a big part of that and we welcome any further ideas and suggestions that you may have to help feed into that Local Plan and into other areas of cutting our carbon footprint.

Supplementary Question

You did not mention percentages on new developments. Is that 100% homes you hope and also public buildings that we are going to build in the future? Are we going to aim for carbon neutral with schools and things?

Supplementary Answer

I may need to refer you to my colleague in terms of planning for those specifics as clearly that falls under Wayne’s remit rather than mine specifically but my personal hope is that the amended Local Plan will include some very specific targets around carbon neutral homes as we work towards that plan of being carbon neutral by 2030.

Councillor Smith provided the following answer:

Having spent most of my last 15 years working for an energy company and working in new housing it is very difficult as you have to follow national policy. There used to be the thing called the Merton rule which gave you 10% and then we had the code for sustainable homes and you follow national guidance and on every application you, as Wokingham Borough and as the Planning Committee, work to the legislation that is in front of you. I mean one of the jobs that we have got to do as a local council is try to inform the national council on some of the policies that we are trying to implement here but developers will always apply national policy and it is not going to be easy. But it is going to be a challenge that we are going to have to take and work with developers especially as we work through

the Local Plan in building above those standards because, as you have probably heard, the Government is working towards zero carbon homes by 2030.

Now zero carbon homes by 2030 really means that you will be supplying energy off grid so the days of gas boilers will have gone. So you will be relying on ground source, air source and solar panels to deliver those. All of that technology is not there today. It is there as a cottage industry and people think it is there and they are doing it in mass production but they are not. There is a lot of work that needs to go into the whole supply chain before that occurs in 2030.

So the challenge for us, especially in the Local Plan, is making sure that we get a lot more of those new technologies into the Plan which encourages new developments to take place. But as I said it is not going to be easy and the best you can get is to say that all new homes from 2030 will be zero carbon. The biggest challenge is retrofit. It is not easy.

14.6 Rachel Bishop-Firth asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

I was concerned to see the plans for the conversion of another office block on the Toutley Road industrial estate into residential housing. I've walked round the existing office conversion on the same estate. The problems with this form of housing are immediately obvious from a quick visit. These are not purpose built apartments constructed as housing - it's an office block divided into living spaces. Residents' privacy is compromised, there is no garden space and the block is isolated on an industrial estate. This is going to magnify the effects of any anti-social behaviour which starts in the flats on the rest of those living there.

I understand that we have a housing crisis nationally, and that this development is a roof over people's heads, but this is not the kind of suitable permanent housing which will help build strong communities. It's not somewhere that people will choose to settle down and raise a family. In fact, similar developments elsewhere have been linked to increases in anti-social behaviour and crime.

What steps is the Council talking to ensure that Wokingham is building housing which is suitable for the long term?

Answer

I also share your concerns. Unfortunately as you are probably aware not all new developments, and especially where we are changing from office blocks and you take Toutley Road as a good example. they do not need planning permission. Under the national guidance there is what is referred to as a "prior approval" but the only areas that the Council can look at, even if you referred it to the Planning Committee it would be the same, are areas such as flooding, contamination, highways and the impacts of noise from nearby commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development. The Council is not allowed to attend and look at other matters, such as quality of accommodation in terms of size and availability of amenity space. I agree with you that it is not right but that is national planning guidance.

Sometimes where we are in control, and I think most of us would agree that what we have built in Wokingham is to a very high standard as we have seen through the New Homes Survey that we commission every year and through the feedback that we had through the

local update that we have done for the Local Plan. But it is a national issue and it is not just happening in Wokingham, I think Reading is suffering from it much more than Wokingham, because they have got a lot more offices that are being converted but there is nothing that we can do about it as it currently stands under the national planning policy.

Supplementary Question

As long as we fail to build enough affordable housing, we will continue to see lower earners being pushed into this kind of unsuitable housing, which doesn't even provide CIL money for the community.

There was no affordable housing built on the Elms Field development, there is none planned for the Carnival Pool site. There are a few key worker homes on Peach Place which have no parking and are below the standards we would expect from a private developer. Phoenix Place replaced existing affordable homes with newer affordable homes; but fewer of them. The existence of very low quality housing in Wokingham demonstrates that we are not providing enough homes for our lower earners.

What are the Council's plans for ensuring that enough homes are built for low and medium-earner families?

Supplementary Answer

I think there are a lot of questions there and if Councillor Kaiser was here I think he would give you a much better answer than I would on housing and what his plans are with our housing companies etc.

We always try to get 35% affordable in any development. Sometimes that is not achievable and we try to get other areas through commuted sums. But in the specifics I think we need to give you a much more detailed answer and the best way to do that is if I get John Kaiser to give you a written answer.

14.7 Paul Fishwick asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

At the Executive meeting on 28th March 2019, I asked about the issue of the frequent flooding of the B3030 King Street Lane Winnersh between Sainsbury's and Allnatt Avenue that impacts on the travelling public and adjacent residents by flooding their gardens and has now occurred 39 times since March 2018.

In his response, the Executive Member agreed to an onsite meeting with myself and local residents. In an e-mail exchange on the 1st April 2019, it was agreed to meet soon after the CCTV survey results were available which were envisaged within a couple of weeks. However, following being elected to this Council I now find that no CCTV survey has been carried out and there are still flooding events taking place impacting on residents. Another three months has been lost due to in the inefficiency of this Council.

What urgent action is the Executive Member going to take to expedite resolving this long-standing issue?

Answer

I have only just taken this role on so the previous discussions were with the previous Executive Member for the Environment.

Yes I agree with you there is a problem there which needs to be resolved. Following that Executive meeting on 28th March 2019 Officers did respond quite quickly by visiting the affected area.

Detailed investigation by the Officers revealed that the problem was caused by Sainsbury's private drainage system which is connected to the highways drainage system. When the system is full Sainsbury's empty that system and that tends to lead to water overwhelming the highways drainage system and hence the flooding.

Officers met Sainsbury's in April 2019 and it became apparent that there was a problem with one of the drainage pumps. That was replaced and fixed and there was no further flooding reported and as such no CCTV survey was commissioned by the Council.

However on 11th June Officers once again received complaints from the residents of further flooding and I believe there was a meeting arranged for 17th June between yourself and Councillor DuBey but I am not sure if that took place.

However I was told that was to discuss a potential solution but moving forward we will be carrying out dye testing, CCTV and jetting works in this location, and staff have re-engaged with Sainsbury's in the faint hope to achieve a solution for this problem. So watch this space.

Supplementary Question

I am not criticising the Officers I am criticising the process which has happened because this has been going on for an awful long time as I said. No CCTV surveys have been undertaken which was promised and it is only since I have been elected I have found this out and it was following a meeting on 17th June with the Officer that I found out that there was no CCTV.

As I stated at the Executive meeting in March I had reported this last year, in June and again in November. I had lots of evidence but sadly nobody would come and talk to me at all because I knew where the flooding was coming from and if it wasn't for my intervention on 17th June this serious matter of flooding would have continued because no proper action was taking place. So what measure will the Executive Member put in place to ensure that when reported incidences such as this are submitted either by Councillors or by residents they are actually taken seriously and actioned urgently as they clearly have not been in this particular instance?

Supplementary Answer provide by the Leader of Council

Every complaint that you give to Officers is treated seriously and it is wrong to assume that they do not. The assumption was that the flooding occurrence had not occurred again and therefore the problem was fixed which in a lot of cases of flooding that is the case. So I think you are wrong in that assumption that your complaints are not taken seriously.

14.8 Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services the following question:

Question

Agenda item 15

Whilst we agree with the proposals for this item, plus we do not wish to delay implementation of the recommendations, we have severe concerns about the impact of

how the structure of WBC Adult Services in relation to Optalis has got to this position. Plus we have concerns how it will interface in the future.

Safeguarding is an issue that impacts ALL Councillors on WBC. We therefore believe that there needs to be a major investigation into this area. Will you support the implementation of a specific task and finish group to look at the issues arising from how we got to where we are and how this change could impact the interface and working between WBC and Optalis in the future?

Answer

I am pleased that your Group is inclined to support the proposal. I also welcome your statement that you will not seek to delay these changes. However, as we have had written correspondence about, I do not believe a task and finish group is necessary in this situation. I have committed to you in writing and to Councillor Croy and I will commit to you in public that I will continue to keep you all informed on the progress of these changes. I think it is important generally that all our efforts are focused on improving things for our residents and the vulnerable adults in our care and that our staff have the correct and most efficient structures, processes and systems to do this. This is what the change proposed is seeking to address.

I think generally, again as I have briefed yourself and Councillor Croy, we are also looking at the structure of Optalis to ensure it can adapt to the ever and fast moving pace of change within the environment in adult services. We are in the process of putting in place new directors and these changes will take a couple of months to be put in place and at that point I will be happy to update you, Councillor Croy and the Independents on progress.

I would state that Optalis is rated as good / outstanding by the CQC in its Wokingham care services and I would say in my opinion this is a fantastic achievement. This is a credit to the leadership and the staff of Optalis who I know work very hard to achieve this. Optalis will continue to provide care and support services for Wokingham Borough residents as it does now.

The main reason for this change is principally to tidy up the statutory controls. We believe that if we bring these under our direct control we will be able to improve performance and the quality of the service generally which is a benefit to all our residents. Also in an environment where the pace of change is ever quickening we will be able to transact a quicker response to statutory services going forwards as we will have direct control. As discussed at the meeting when I briefed yourself and Councillor Croy these changes require no additional capital and any costs will be completely absorbed in the current budget. Demand for adult services has notably increased over the last 12-18 months and it is important basically that we continue to take steps to ensure the service and the cost of it are very tightly controlled and we are always working to try and improve the quality for the best interests of our residents.

Supplementary Question

At the same meeting it was indicated that the reason for the change was that the current system was generating an element of stalling of the processes and that the time taken to get through the system had increased to 16 weeks and I think safeguarding is a very serious issue and it affects all Councillors as I mention. Do you think you are being complacent in not accepting such a working group?

Supplementary Answer

The answer is no. You wrote to me about this obviously and I responded with my decision. You asked me to reconsider and I did contemplate and reconsider. You have subsequently been in contact I believe with the Leader and the Chief Executive of the Council and they have advised, as I did at the time, that basically if you don't agree with my decision that is fine as I respect your opinion but the correct way to go about that is to take this to Overview and Scrutiny and ask them to review the past history of the Company, the structures, the way it has been set up and the performance.

I think all of us whether it is myself, whether it is you basically, whether it is other Members, journalists, we need to think about what we say and the impact it has on the staff who work hard for us and also the adults in our care. Basically I come from a private sector background and I have always worked for small to medium sized companies and there if you do not improve the quality of what you do you are overtaken basically and you lose business. I am trying to bring that principle to what I am doing here to try and drive up the quality of everything that we do. I know that the new DASS basically shares my opinion entirely.

My view would be basically that residents looking in on me and what I am doing would want me to be focussed on things going forward and driving up the standards basically because we are caring for some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

So I respect your opinion but basically I do not agree with you but that is kind of where we are.

15. DECISION REPORT RE ADULT SOCIAL CARE STATUTORY SERVICES

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposal to transfer all the statutory functions (brokerage and support services) and staff from Optalis Ltd to Wokingham Borough Council.

The Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services explained that the changes proposed would move the statutory services from Optalis to the Council which would mean that they would be all under one roof. The reason for the proposed change was that there was currently a split pathway which meant that some parts were dealt with by Optalis and some by the Council and it was believed that bringing all these services under one roof would give Officers direct control, transact change quicker and drive up standards.

The Leader of Council clarified that Optalis was not being absorbed into WBC as had been reported in the press. This was confirmed by Councillor Margetts who stated that the Council was fully committed to Optalis and it would be continuing to provide care and support services. It was the statutory services, which were currently shared, that were being brought under the Council's direct control.

Councillor Margetts also highlighted the good work carried out by Optalis and drew Members' attention to the fact that the CQC had rated Optalis as "good to excellent".

Councillor Margetts also confirmed that the transfer of staff from Optalis to the Council would take about three months and it was hoped to see improvements within six months. This would be kept under review and everyone would be kept updated. In addition Officers had asked for an Independent Peer Review to be carried out in September to make sure that the changes were driving up quality and standards.

RESOLVED: That the transfer of all statutory functions (Brokerage and Support Services) and staff from Optalis Ltd to Wokingham Borough Council be agreed.

16. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposal to undertake a full public consultation on the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020-2030 (ROWIP) which the Council had a duty to prepare and update every 10 years; with the previous Plan being produced in 2010.

The Executive Member for Environment and Leisure introduced the report and advised Members that the consultation was due to start around 4 July for a period of 12 weeks. It was noted that some of the public rights of way had not yet been discussed with the relevant owners of the land.

Councillor Haitham Taylor was pleased to note that her suggestion of including local visually impaired user groups in the list of consultees had been taken up as she felt that it was really important to try and get more residents who were visually impaired to be able to access new pathways and footways so that they could partake in a more healthy lifestyle wherever possible.

RESOLVED: That a full public consultation be undertaken on the Draft Revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2020/2030.

17. ARBORFIELD AND BARKHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposal to consult on the draft Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan and procure an independent examiner to subsequently examine the Plan, including considering all the representations received during the consultation.

The Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement highlighted that the title of the Lead Member mentioned in recommendation 2 was incorrect and asked for this to be amended to the Lead Member for Planning and Enforcement. This amendment was agreed.

Councillor Smith stated that he was very impressed with the Neighbourhood Plan, which had been produced by Arborfield and Newland and Barkham Parish Councils, and the work they had undertaken.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) a 6 week consultation on the draft Arborfield and Barkham be approved; and
- 2) an examiner be appointed to independently examine the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan, delegating the appointment and submission of the examination documentation to the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and Enforcement.

18. BERKSHIRE LOCAL INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION

(Councillor Haitham Taylor declared a personal interest in this item)

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposed response to the consultation questions posed on the Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy (BLIS) Framework Document.

When introducing the report the Executive Member for Business and Economic Development highlighted that in the past Wokingham had benefitted from over £70m out of the £180m that was available for the whole of Berkshire which had been spent mainly on undertaking improvements to roads.

Councillor Haitham Taylor informed Members Central Government wanted to fast track the BLIS which would be one of the first in the UK. It was hoped that the Government would complete the BLIS process earlier than the 2020 date mentioned in the report.

In relation to consultation response 4-2 Councillor Murray wanted to ensure that more emphasis would be placed on climate change and environmental sustainability issues in the framework and any funding that was handed down would be done on condition of there being an element of climate change and environmental sustainability responsibility. Councillor Murray was advised that this was repeated in a number of the consultation responses, was being picked up the LEP and would be reflected in the document coming back in the autumn.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the work the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership has done to date on the Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy Framework Document be endorsed;
- 2) the responses from Wokingham Borough Council to the consultation questions posed on the Berkshire Local Industrial Strategy Framework Document be approved.