

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE EXECUTIVE  
HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2019 FROM 7.30 PM TO 7.48 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Councillors: John Halsall (Chairman), John Kaiser, UllaKarin Clark, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts and Wayne Smith

**Other Councillors Present**

Laura Blumenthal  
Lindsay Ferris  
Michael Firmager  
Malcolm Richards  
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey  
Caroline Smith  
Bill Soane

**50. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Parry Batth, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Stuart Munro and Gregor Murray.

Councillor Laura Blumenthal, Deputy Executive Member for Climate Emergency, attended the meeting on behalf of Councillor Murray and Councillor Michael Firmager, Deputy Executive Member for Environment and Leisure, attended on behalf of Councillor Batth. In accordance with legislation Councillors Blumenthal and Firmager could take part in any discussions but were not entitled to vote.

**51. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 31 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader of Council.

**52. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor UllaKarin Clark declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 57 Gorrick Square Development by virtue of the fact that she was an unpaid Non-Executive Director and Chairman of Loddon Homes Ltd. Councillor Clark remained in the meeting during discussions but did not vote on the matter.

**53. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

There were no public questions received.

**54. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

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

**54.1 Caroline Smith asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:**

**Question**

Is there going to be any affordable housing in the Carnival Pool Development?

**Answer**

Phase 2 of the Carnival regeneration scheme will deliver fantastic new leisure, cultural and community facilities for all our residents. This includes a new library, new swimming pools, a new large sports hall and studios that can be converted for performance and community use. There will also be extended fitness provision and a children's soft play area. The centre has been designed to make it more accessible for all our residents. Alongside these new facilities, over 50 one and two bedroom apartments are being built on the site.

A key aim of the Council's wider town centre regeneration is to deliver a range of additional benefits, including a mix of community, social and leisure uses such as the new Elms Field play area, public realm improvements and key worker housing that we have delivered at Peach Place. These would not necessarily be delivered to such an extent if the Council was not the developer of these projects and it was led solely by a private sector developer.

In order to deliver the wide range of leisure, cultural and community facilities in Phase 2 of the Carnival scheme, the Council is taking a lower financial return on the development of the site than would normally be acceptable to a private developer. Unfortunately this does mean that there are insufficient remaining finances within the project specifically to fund on-site affordable housing.

However the scheme is contributing over £800,000 towards the Community Infrastructure Levy which, as well as being used to contribute to the provision of other infrastructure and services across the Borough, this money could be used to fund affordable housing projects elsewhere.

The Council remains strongly committed to the provision of affordable homes and, working with our housing association partners and our own housing companies, last year we delivered 365 new affordable homes and in this year 2019/20 we are also expecting to deliver 380.

**Supplementary Question**

So that was a no then – no affordable housing? Will there be some assurance in that the extra money you have put on one side you are going to commit to some affordable housing?

**Supplementary Answer**

We are doing some restructuring with regard to our housing companies which are cross party now. We have directors from different parties and one of the things we are making a commitment to is to deliver 1,000 homes in four years. A vast majority of those homes will be affordable and we will be using various streams of finance to deliver those homes. We will be using the headroom, which is basically what can be borrowed from the Housing Revenue Account, which will mean they will be able to deliver more social housing and we will be using commuted affordable sums to deliver affordable housing. Also, as you probably know, the Council is committed to commercial investments and parts of these commercial investments will be housing as we move forward.

## **55. FEES AND CHARGES**

The Executive considered a report relating to proposed fees and charges for Council services.

The Leader of Council introduced the report and advised the meeting that he wished to propose an amendment to the report which related to the introduction of a new charge of £14.00 for the EU Settlement Scheme ID Document Scanning service for non-Borough residents, which would take effect from 1 December 2019. Councillor Halsall provided some background to the charge and confirmed that this service would be free for Borough residents.

This amendment was agreed by the Executive.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved to be effective from the dates listed on the schedule;
- 2) Wokingham's discretionary fees and charges for the Public Protection Partnership be approved, and the statutory charges be noted, as set out in Appendix B, effective from 1 April 2020;
- 3) the impact of the Public Protection Partnership unifying charges across the three partner authorities on a cost recovery basis, which will be covered in the Medium Term Financial Plan as a Special Item, be noted;
- 4) a fee of £14.00 (incl) for the EU Settlement Scheme ID Document Scanning service for non-Borough residents be introduced from 1 December 2019.

## **56. ARBORFIELD AND BARKHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Executive considered a report setting out the response of the Independent Examiner to the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan.

When introducing the report the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement highlighted the process that had been followed which included a six week consultation and the examination of the Plan which was carried out by an Independent Examiner in September 2019.

Councillor Smith advised that feedback had been received from the Examiner and this had been included in the report. It was noted that the next stage in the process was a Neighbourhood Plan Referendum which was scheduled to take place on 6 February 2020.

Councillor Kaiser highlighted the importance of the Plan to the neighbourhood area which had taken four years of committed hard work by Arborfield and Barkham Parish Councils.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the report of the Independent Examination into the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan be accepted and that the modifications recommended by the Independent Examiner be made to the plan prior to a local referendum being held; and

- 2) it be agreed that the referendum version of the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan, as modified in accordance with the recommendations following Independent Examination, meets the basic conditions and complies with the provisions of Paragraph 8 (1) (a) (2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Localism Act 2011). A statement to that effect will be published on the Council's website as well as the 'Referendum Version' of the Plan; and
- 3) a local referendum be organised and conducted on 6 February 2020 in the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood area. This will allow all eligible persons that are registered on the electoral roll within the two parishes, to vote on whether the Arborfield and Barkham Neighbourhood Plan should be used by Wokingham Borough Council to help it determine planning applications in the Neighbourhood Area.

## **57. GORRICK SQUARE DEVELOPMENT**

*(Councillor UllaKarin Clark declared a personal interest in this item)*

The Executive considered a report in relation to a proposal for a revised funding model to develop a 3-bedroom bespoke bungalow on land between 24 and 25 Gorricks Square to meet the specialist housing needs of three individuals with learning/physical difficulties.

The Executive Member for Finance and Housing advised the meeting that the Gorricks Square project was being carried out by the Council's housing company. When the project was first agreed by the Executive in 2016 the land between 24 and 25 Gorricks Square was identified for the development of a single 3-4 bedroom bungalow with an estimated cost of £349,000. Prior to the planning application being submitted a more appropriate need for the site was identified by the Adult Social Care Team who asked for the scheme to be redesigned to provide a bespoke bungalow for three individuals with learning and physical disabilities.

Councillor Kaiser advised that the new scheme includes three ensuite bedrooms, staff offices, shared kitchen and living room which totals 155 m<sup>2</sup>. The scheme is 50% larger than the original proposal and has a revised cost of £815,000.

Councillor Kaiser highlighted the business case, as set out in the report, and the fact that the current scheme would enable the three individuals to live independently.

**RESOLVED:** That the revised funding model for the proposed revised development totalling £815,000, including confirming the allocation of up to £349,000 of Section 106 receipts and a long term loan to Loddon Homes of £231,000, be approved.

## **58. CARNIVAL POOL SITE, WELLINGTON RD, WOKINGHAM**

The Executive considered a report relating to the appropriation of land at the Carnival Pool site, which is held by the Council, to enable the delivery of the final phase of the town centre regeneration in accordance with detailed planning consent (ref. 170212) granted in February 2018.

The Leader of Council provided a comprehensive update on the progress of the site and advised the meeting that construction of the new Leisure Centre and library at the Carnival Site was due to start on site in the Summer of 2020 and the new facility would open in the

Summer of 2022. It was noted that a procurement process to appoint a build contractor had begun.

Councillor Halsall provided detailed information on appropriation which was a statutory process that Councils could exercise to reallocate land for one purpose eg public open space, employment, housing to a planning purpose. Appropriation was part of the process to ensure that the Council was ready to start on site next year with no legal or property issues outstanding and had been used across all the town centre regeneration sites, including Peach Place and Elms Field.

Councillor Halsall reminded the meeting that in July 2019 the Executive had authorised the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to acquire all outstanding parcels of land not owned by the Council. Since July all remaining freehold interests in the site had been acquired by agreement therefore there was no need for the Council to exercise its CPO powers.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) it be noted that the Council no longer needs to proceed with a compulsory purchase order ("CPO") in respect of land to the south of Wellington Road, Wokingham known as Carnival Pool shown indicatively edged red on the plan at Appendix 1 of the report ("the Site") pursuant to section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) (the "1990 Act") because all outstanding freehold interests in the Site have been acquired by agreement;
- 2) it be authorised, to the extent that it is not already held for such purposes, that the land held by the Council and comprising the Site shown coloured red and blue on the plan at Appendix 2 of the report, be appropriated for planning purposes in accordance with section 122 of the local Government Act 1972 from the date this resolution is made, such land being no longer required for the purpose for which it was previously held.