



**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS
FOR THE PERIOD**

3 October 2016 to 2 November 2016

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Couldrick', written in a cursive style.

Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive
Published on 9 November 2016



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

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2016 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.00 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Tim Holton (Chairman), Chris Singleton (Vice-Chairman), Chris Bowring, Philip Houldsworth, John Kaiser, Malcolm Richards, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey and Bill Soane

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: David Lee

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Strategic Delivery Manager
Chris Easton, Service Manager, Highways Development Management
Ian Bailey, Service Manager, Development Management
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Arabella Yandle
Madeleine Shopland

Case Officers Present

David Smith
Alex Thwaites
Graham Vaughan

53. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Wayne Smith.

54. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 September 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MEMBERS' UPDATE

There are a number of references to the Member's Update within these minutes. The Members' Update was circulated to all present prior to the meeting. A copy is attached.

55. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Kaiser stated that he had been asked to list item 61 – Application no 161452 1-3 Coppid Hill, Wokingham by Barkham Parish Council for planning reasons. He asked that it be noted that he had not formed an opinion on the application and that he would base his decision on the case put before the Committee.

56. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no items withdrawn or deferred.

**57. APPLICATION NO - 161839 BELL FARM, BELL FOUNDRY LANE,
WOKINGHAM**

Proposal: HYBRID APPLICATION

OUTLINE APPLICATION: A section of the Northern Distributor Road (NDR) and associated infrastructure, including a cycle and footway. (All Matters Reserved)

FULL APPLICATION: Phased development for the erection of 128 dwellings and associated areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG), open spaces and

drainage/attenuation. Two accesses from Bell Foundry Lane and a temporary cycle and footway. Demolition of existing farm buildings and one dwelling.

Applicant: Berkeley Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 11 to 58.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Proposed amendments to condition 2 to include Phasing Plan 410.CP.105;
- Proposed amendment to condition 11 regarding external plumbing and pipework;
- Proposed amendment to condition 28 to clarify the occupation of development phases following the completion of pedestrian and cycle links;
- Proposed deletion of condition 32 as the SANG was being dealt with comprehensively under the S106 agreement;
- Proposed additional condition regarding the requirement of visibility splays prior to commencement of vehicular access onto or from Twyford Road. This was in the interests of highway safety;
- Consultation response from the Environment Agency who confirmed that they had no objection to the application.

Members had visited the site on Friday 7 October.

In absence of Kevin Morgan, Wokingham Town Council, who had registered to speak in objection to the application, the attention of Members was drawn to a submission from Wokingham Town Council within the report.

Elkie Lees spoke in favour of the application on behalf of Berkley Homes, applicant. She stated that Thames Water, the Environment Agency and Natural England were satisfied with the application and that it met the requirements and conditions set by the Council. She commented on the width of the road, stating that the developers were seeking an application to widen the road and that to carry out the works, with a minimum loss of mature trees on the opposite side of the road, the developer was gifting land to facilitate the construction of the Northern Distributor Road. She also stated that the development would result in the provision of 24 acres of new public open space and CIL and Section 106 contributions to the Council of over £4m.

Councillor David Lee, Ward Member, spoke against the application. He raised concerns about the design and whether it met national policies / guidance and the Council's own policies regarding the layout, properties backing onto main roads, road widths and the use of fencing. He also questioned the size of gardens, which in some cases fell below the Council's policy of 11m in length.

In response to Member questions, Members were advised that the Manual for Streets referred to by Councillor Lee was guidance. The Planning Officer stated that the site layout had been designed in response to the rural nature of the surrounding area, opposite Cantley Recreational Ground and existing mature hedge and trees. Officers felt this layout in this instance was appropriate and the combination of design features provided interest and maintained surveillance and was in keeping with the area. . As a result, on this occasion and taking in to account the proposed planting of hedgerow trees proposed between the fence and road, the Officers felt the design solution on this application was

acceptable. The details of the boundaries would be dealt with under the recommended conditions, but officers advised that given the location of the boundaries of properties backing onto Bell Foundry Lane they would be constructed of brick. The combination of this and planting, whilst not acoustic in nature, would have the effect of deadening the sound of the road and reflected similar developments in the area such as Montague Park and within North Wokingham. The Planning Officer also commented on the length of gardens in the plans, indicating that there were only a few gardens which fell marginally short of the Council's 11m standard and the width of the gardens had been accepted as adequate compensation for any minor shortfall in length.

In response to a Member question Officers clarified parking allocation is in accordance with WBC standards.

Members questioned the capacity of the planned changes to the site to resist the impact of flooding. The Planning Officer stated that after a flooding episode in 2007, corrective work had been carried out to the existing culverts / ditches and that there would also be an opportunity to improve drains as part of the building of the Northern Distributory Road (NDR) and development. The Service Manager, Highways Development Management, stated that the ditch described and illustrated in the report had been made wider and deeper to increase its capacity, whilst still being integral to the landscaping and designed to be safely accessible to residents. He also indicated that as the ditch was located between the path and highway that it would be maintained by the Council as part of the highway.

Members raised questions regarding the odour plume from an existing sewage treatment plant that might affect properties on the site. The Planning Officer stated that works currently being carried out by Thames Water would reduce the existing emissions from the treatment works by 46%. The prevailing winds were South-Westerly. Whilst change of wind direction would occur, according to meteorological data the residential areas would not experience odours level greater than 3 ouE/M³ for more than 175 hrs per annum. This is in accordance with Environment Agency guidelines.

A Member questioned the development being in this location since, although it was within the SDL boundary defined in the Core Strategy, it represented an addition in relation to the SDL Masterplan. The Planning Officer stated that this is a sustainable location, given its position on the NDR (with bus services) and the walking and cycling opportunities that would be available to connect it to Wokingham. There is also the planned delivery of infrastructure to accommodate the population growth in the SDL. The development mitigates its impacts through its design and S106/CIL contributions.

A Member asked about the siting of the affordable housing within the development. The Planning Officer stated that Registered Providers of Affordable Housing preferred that the houses be grouped together for management purposes. This is a relatively small number of affordable dwellings being brought forward (26) and mirrors the clustering of affordable housing being brought forward in the individual phases of the other developments within the SDL sites. A good distribution of affordable housing will therefore be secured across the SDL.

In regards to the public footbridge, Members were advised that a new bridge would have a steel frame and would be easy to maintain and this cost would be covered under maintenance contributions.

RESOLVED: That application No. 161839 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 13 to 22, with conditions 2, 11, and 28 amended, the deletion of condition 32 and the additional condition as set out in the Members' Update.

58. APPLICATION NO - 161747 LAND AT ARBORFIELD GARRISON, BIGGS LANE ('PARCELS A-G')

Proposal: Application for Reserved Matters for the erection of 223 dwellings together with access from Sheerlands Road and the Nine Mile Ride Extension, with associated internal access roads, parking, landscaping, open space, footpaths, bridleways and sustainable urban drainage (SUDS), relating to Parcel A-G land.

Applicant: Crest Nicholson Operations Limited C/O Boyer Planning Ltd

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 59 to 90.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Proposed update to conditions 2 and 6;
- Proposed removal of condition 5 as this was covered in a previous condition on the outline (hard and landscaping details);
- Proposed amendment to condition 9 to ensure satisfactory development in the interests of sustainable travel;
- Member note clarifying that drainage matters formed part of the outline application and as such did not come under this application.

Members had visited the site at the outset of the development of Arborfield Garrison.

In response to Members questions, the Planning Officer stated that there was an overall density of 33 houses per hectare, which was within guidelines. The Service Manager, Highways Development Management indicated where there was access to the school and clarified the proposed increase in public transport that was outlined in the Public Transport Strategy Plan.

In response to a Member question, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management, stated that the pond is likely to require some deepening and widening to allow for a discrepancy in the submitted detail. The Council is happy with the submission and has confidence in the scheme but requires the updated drawing to demonstrate to Council that the scheme will be delivered in accordance with the approved drainage strategy.

A member questioned the frequency of the bus service, requesting 15 minutes and its provision early in the build-out of the development to ensure its take-up, rather than the habit of reliance on private cars. The Officer stated that this would have to be balanced against the risk of an early service being under-used and terminated but would be implemented as early as practicable.

RESOLVED: That application no 161747 be approved, subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 61 to 64, with the updates and amendments to conditions 2, 6 and 9 and deletion of condition 5 as set out in the Members' update.

59. APPLICATION NO - 161631 PULLEYN TRANSPORT, CHURCH LANE, THREE MILE CROSS

Proposal: Full planning application for the demolition of existing office building and erection of a cold store warehouse (B8 use class), with ancillary drivers rest accommodation with associated parking and landscaping, the closing of the existing access with formation of a new means of access.

Applicant: Pulleyn Transport Ltd.

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 91 to 106 and Supplementary Agenda pages 3-18.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Proposed amendment to the report relating to floor space;
- Information regarding the mitigation and compensation strategy for bats;
- Clarification regarding the increase of traffic movements expected as a result of the development;
- Clarification of the reference made to the special circumstances of the business;
- Confirmation that the Policy Officer raised no objection to the proposal in respect of policy CP11;
- Illustration of the alteration of the pathway gradient to control egress;
- Proposed amendment to condition 2 to update plans;
- Proposed changes to condition 12 regarding external lighting;
- Proposed additional condition regarding the implementation of the mitigation and compensation strategy to ensure impacts on a protected species and residential amenity are mitigated;
- Proposed additional informative regarding the specification of bat tubes and bat boxes to be used for roost compensation.

Members had visited the site on Friday 7 October.

Thomas Rumble, Woolf Bond Planning, spoke on behalf of the developer in support of the application. He stated that the plan was supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as it offered local employment. He also commented on the access to the site, indicating that the plan would offer an improved view from Church Lane, a separate car park area, a bicycle store and a wider access to permit lorry movement.

Members raised questions regarding the increase in traffic movements and the impact of the proposed application on an area designated as countryside. The Planning Officer stated that the figures in the report presented a worst case scenario in terms of the increase of traffic movements and that this was offset by the improved driver and parking areas on the site and the change to the design to preclude lorries turning left. It was noted that, when viewed in the context of the existing site and the development of a landscaping bund, no harm could be demonstrated.

RESOLVED: That application No. 161631 be approved subject to the conditions set out in Supplementary Agenda pages 4 to 9, with the Report and condition 2 and 12 amended and the additional condition and informative as set out in the Members' Update.

60. APPLICATION NO - 162328 LAND ADJACENT TO 9 MIDDLEFIELDS, RUSCOMBE

Proposal: Full application for the proposed erection of 2no two bedroom semi-detached dwellings with associated parking.

Applicant: Wokingham Housing Limited

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 107 to 120.

Members had visited the site on Friday 7 October.

It was noted that all the properties in the development were to be affordable homes. As such, the applicant could apply for the development to be made exempt from CIL.

In regards to comments in the report about congestion, Members were informed that a survey had been carried out by the applicant and which demonstrated that there was sufficient capacity for on-street parking in the surrounding area.

RESOLVED: That application No. 162328 be approved, subject to the conditions set out in Agenda pages 108 to 111.

61. APPLICATION NO - 161452 1-3 COPPID HILL, BARKHAM ROAD, BARKHAM

Proposal: Outline application for the erection of 3no 4 bedroom detached dwellings and 1no 2 bedroom bungalow with additional parking for 1 - 3 Coppid Hill (access to be considered).

Applicant: Mr P and D Robins

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 121 to 130 and Supplementary Agenda pages 19-30.

The Committee was advised that the Members' Update included:

- Clarification of the proposed parking provision including a revised plan;
- Proposed updates to plan numbers in condition 2;
- Proposed additional condition regarding the clearance of visibility splays in the interests of highway safety and convenience.

Members had visited the site on Friday 7 October.

Laurence Heath, Barkham Parish Council, spoke in objection to the application, outlining the concerns held by local residents in regards to traffic on the road and the positioning of the entrance to the development. He indicated that the 20 mph speed set for part of the road, as a safe road for Bohunt School, should be extended or that the entrance should be moved.

Bill Graham, WMG Architects, spoke in favour of the application on behalf of the developers, outlining that the application fitted with the NPPF as an in-fill build and that it met Wokingham Borough Council requirements. He stated that the design concerns expressed by the Parish Council were not covered by the current application and would be addressed as part of a future application for reserved matters.

In response to the speakers and Member questions, the Service Manager, Highways Development Management stated that there had only been two slight accidents in the last 5 years and that the presence of a mini-roundabout often resulted in slowed traffic movements. He outlined the changes to the original plan and explained the improvements that had been made to improve parking provision and that the indicative outline scheme could provide sufficient parking levels in accordance with the Council's standards, especially when considered in the light of the fact that the garages had not been included in the calculations.

RESOLVED: That application No. 161452 be approved, subject to the conditions set out in Supplementary Agenda pages 20 to 24, with the amendment to condition 2 and the additional condition as set out in the Members' Update.

62. APPLICATION NO - 162396 2 HOLME GREEN, EASTHAMPSTEAD ROAD, WOKINGHAM

Proposal: Application to remove condition 6 of planning consent F/2009/0075 for the proposed erection of single storey rear extension, first floor side dormer extension and creation of porch on front elevation. Condition 6 restricts permitted development rights relating to enlargements or alterations, alterations to the roof, construction of porches and construction of enclosures or outbuildings.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs S and J Rowbotham

The Committee received and reviewed a report about this application, set out in Agenda pages 131 to 142. There was no further update.

Members noted that the removal of the condition had been permitted by changes in regulations and that the neighbouring property, as the second of the two semi-detached houses, had no conditions limiting permitted development rights attached..

RESOLVED: That application No. 162396 be approved, subject to the conditions set out on Agenda page 132.

63. PRE COMMITTEE SITE VISITS

The Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services had recommended that a pre-Committee site visit be undertaken in respect of the following applications:

- 161596- Land to the West of Thames Valley Park Drive - Full application for the proposed development of a Park and Ride facility providing approximately 277 vehicular spaces, motorcycle parking and associated vehicular access and landscaping - to assess the impact of the development on the character of the area.
- 162329 – 21-26 Tape Lane, Hurst - Full application for erection of 11 dwellings with access, parking and landscaping - to assess the impact of the development on the character of the area including adjacent countryside.
- Ref: 162387 – Wheatlands Manor, Fleet Hill, Finchampstead - Full application for the proposed installation of domestic solar panel array - to assess the impact of the development on the character of the area including adjacent countryside.

Members considered the Quarterly Enforcement Monitoring Information included in the Members' Update. Members requested more information regarding the Enforcement Appeal Decision made on Upper Culham Farm.

RESOLVED: That a pre-Committee site visit be undertaken on Friday 4 November 2016 in respect of the following applications:

- 161596- Land to the West of Thames Valley Park Drive - Full application for the proposed development of a Park and Ride facility providing approximately 277 vehicular spaces, motorcycle parking and associated vehicular access and landscaping - to assess the impact of the development on the character of the area.
- 162329 – 21-26 Tape Lane, Hurst - Full application for erection of 11 dwellings with access, parking and landscaping - to assess the impact of the development on the character of the area including adjacent countryside.
- Ref: 162387 – Wheatlands Manor, Fleet Hill, Finchampstead - Full application for the proposed installation of domestic solar panel array - to assess the impact of the development on the character of the area including adjacent countryside.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
PERSONNEL BOARD
HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2016 FROM 7.00 PM TO 7.50 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Stuart Munro (Chairman), Prue Bray, Pauline Helliar-Symons, Charles Margetts and Barrie Patman

Other Councillors Present

Lindsay Ferris

Officers Present

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive
Sarah Swindley, Service Manager Human Resources
Anne Hunter, Service Manager Democratic Services

15. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Alistair Auty and Pauline Jorgensen.

16. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 September 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

18. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received.

19. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions received.

20. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as appropriate.

21. SHAPING THE COUNCIL OF THE FUTURE

Personnel Board considered an exempt report relating to Shaping the Council of the Future. The Board was informed that due to a change of circumstances a decision on recommendation 2, as set out in the report, was no longer required.

Andy Couldrick went through the report, which included options for the selection process for appointing tier 2 Officers to their posts, and following discussion Members agreed Option 3 which was the 'slot in' of existing directors into the new leadership team. In coming to this decision Members recognised that all the current directors had previously been appointed to their current roles by the Personnel Board.

Members noted that one of the current Directors had declared their intention not to seek a role in the new structure and therefore the following appointments were approved with effect from 1 November 2016:

Chief Executive – Andy Couldrick;
Director of Corporate Services – Graham Ebers;
Director of People Services – Judith Ramsden;
Director of Customer and Locality Services – Heather Thwaites.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Option 3, to 'slot in' the existing Directors into the new leadership team, be approved as the selection process for tier 2 Officers;
- 2) the following appointments to Chief Executive and the revised tier 2 posts, with effect from 1 November 2016, be approved:

Chief Executive – Andy Couldrick;
Director of Corporate Services – Graham Ebers;
Director of People Services – Judith Ramsden;
Director of Customer and Locality Services – Heather Thwaites.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2016 FROM 5.00 PM TO 6.15 PM**

Present

Julian McGhee-Sumner	WBC
Dr Johan Zylstra	NHS Wokingham CCG
Keith Baker	WBC
Prue Bray	WBC
Charlotte Haitham Taylor	WBC
Superintendent Rob France	Community Safety Partnership
Beverley Graves	Business Skills and Enterprise Partnership
Dr Lise Llewellyn	Director of Public Health
Judith Ramsden	Director of Children's Services
Clare Rebbeck	Voluntary Sector representative
Katie Summers	Director of Operations, Wokingham CCG
Stuart Rowbotham	Director of Health and Wellbeing
Jeremy Sharpe (substituting Kevin Ward)	
Jim Stockley (substituting Nick Campbell-White)	

Also Present:

Madeleine Shopland	Principal Democratic Services Officer
Darrell Gale	Consultant in Public Health
Patricia Knight	Public Health

28. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Nick Campbell-White, Nikki Luffingham, Kevin Ward and Dr Cathy Winfield.

29. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 11 August 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

It was noted that the new Development Officer recruited by Involve covered Bracknell and Wokingham.

30. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

31. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

32. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

33. UPDATES FROM BOARD MEMBERS

The Board was updated on the work of a number of Board members. During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

Business, Skills and Enterprise Partnership:

- Beverley Graves advised Board members that the targets relating to those seeking information, advice and guidance were being overachieved. However, the target 'Work Experience – 5 days with same employer' was underperforming, achieving 0.9% against a target of 3.2%.
- The way NEETs were reported would be changing. The focus would be on those aged under 18.
- The Board was updated on the 'Number of over 50s clients seeking information, advice and guidance from Wokingham Job Support.' Dr Zylstra questioned how this compared with the previous year and was informed that the figures were slightly lower this year.

Community Safety Partnership:

- Superintendent France indicated that crime in the Borough remained low. An increase in sexual crimes and violence against the person was being seen, however, it was thought that this was largely the result of increased reporting as opposed to an increase in incidents. Incidents of burglary were reducing.
- A long term focus of the Community Safety Partnership was the increased risk to vulnerable people around fraud. In response to a question regarding online fraud, Superintendent France explained that frauds were referred to Action Fraud but that if there were local lines of enquiry these would be investigated locally.
- Clare Rebbeck reminded the Board that Safer Place Scheme cards had recently been launched.
- Councillor Bray commented that nationally there had been an increase in hate crime post Brexit and questioned whether this was the case in Wokingham. Superintendent France indicated that the situation was monitored but that there had not been requests for additional police response.
- There had been incidents of people dressing as scary clowns within Thames Valley. Neighbourhood Policing would be working with schools and shops in an effort to reduce such incidents. The Police had not spoken to perpetrators locally as incidents were often reported after the event.

Place and Community Partnership:

- The partnership had been discussing its relationship with the Health and Wellbeing Board with Stuart Rowbotham. Stuart Rowbotham indicated that as part of the action plan for the recommendations of the Local Government Association Peer Review the structure of the sub partnerships would be reviewed.

Voluntary Sector:

- On 18 October a Benefits Workshop would be held to discuss the implications of the benefits cap that would come into effect in November. 50 people so far had booked a place. Councillor Haitham Taylor questioned whether the workshop would also cover budgeting in light of the likely increase in the cost of food. Clare Rebbeck commented that the Citizens Advice Bureau offered such workshops.
- Involve was moving offices on 31 October. It was holding its Annual General Meeting on 20 October and Board members were welcome to attend.
- The community awareness events for the next year were being set. The first, 'Let's talk cancer', would be held in January.

- Events to celebrate volunteering and the launch of the new care provider would also be held.

Healthwatch Wokingham Borough:

- The Q2 report was being finalised.
- Healthwatch Wokingham Borough had recently published a report regarding access to dental practices within the Borough for those who were hearing impaired. Some positive comments had been received in response.
- Consideration would be given to collaborating with other Healthwatches and local organisations such as More Arts to maximise resources.

RESOLVED: That the updates from Board members be noted.

34. BERKSHIRE WEST, OXFORDSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PLAN UPDATE

Stuart Rowbotham updated Board members on the Berkshire West, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- NHS England had requested that Health and Wellbeing Boards not publish iterative plans at this stage.
- Katie Summers advised that NHS England had released planning guidance on the matter. The possibility of the plan areas being further sub divided had been raised which would be investigated.
- In response to a question from Councillor Bray, Dr Llewellyn clarified that the deadline for the next plan submission was 21 October.
- Stuart Rowbotham indicated that there had been changes to the engagement model and that local authorities would now be invited to a quarterly briefing as opposed to being part of the leadership model.

RESOLVED: That the update on the Berkshire West, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire Sustainability and Transformation Plan be noted.

35. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE INTEGRATION UPDATE

Stuart Rowbotham updated the Board on the progress of health and social care integration.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- The Board was taken through the Better Care Fund on a page.
- The WISH team was well embedded and delivering on a challenging plan to reduce the number of delayed transfers in care. Wokingham was 25% ahead of target which was unprecedented.
- Delivery of the Non Elective Admissions Plan was a challenge. However, Wokingham was still rated number two for performance in the country.
- Neighbourhood Clusters had been renamed Community Health and Social Care (CHASC). Stuart Rowbotham outlined the drivers for the CHASC, the financial benefits and the benefits to people and professionals. The financial benefits would need to be system wide. It was noted that the return of interest, funded by the Better Care Fund and existing staffing costs, was 134%.

- The Board would receive a report on the progress of the CHASC at a future meeting.
- Board members agreed that it was important that Wokingham celebrated its successes. Wokingham was viewed as a good role model with regards to health and social care integration.

RESOLVED: That the update on the integration of health and social care be noted.

36. BETTER CARE FUND (BCF) ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

The Board noted the Better Care Fund Annual Report 2015/16.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- The report provided a high level overview of performance against the budget of the Better Care Fund for 2015/16 in accordance with the Section 75 agreement.
- Stuart Rowbotham commented that some Better Care investments such as the Step up, Step Down and domiciliary care projects had not worked as well as had been hoped for and that consideration was being given to future investments.
- Councillor Haitham Taylor suggested that when the next iteration of the Better Care Fund Plan was produced, that the plans of similar Health and Wellbeing Boards be looked at for examples of good practice. She indicated that the Red Cross had recently undertaken a piece of work on Health and Wellbeing Boards and the Better Care Fund.
- Dr Llewellyn emphasised that Wokingham was a leading example of the integration of health and social care.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

37. HEALTH AND WELLBEING DASHBOARD

The Board considered the Health and Wellbeing Dashboard. Stuart Rowbotham indicated that the dashboard was the first iteration in its current form.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- Councillor Bray commented that the colour coding was helpful and that the dashboard was more accessible and easier to understand. Patricia Knight was thanked for her work on the dashboard.
- Judith Ramsden indicated that there would be a discussion at the next Children and Young People's Partnership meeting about priorities which could highlight the KPIs which would have the greatest impact on commissioning decisions.
- Judith Ramsden went on to state that it was important to link the headings to particular priorities. In addition she felt that it was important that the measures relating to the NHS Trust Board workforce were more specific as to which elements of the workforce were under consideration. Judith Ramsden also suggested that it would be helpful to monitor worklessness within families where both parents were not in employment.
- Katie Summers updated the Board on the 'Number of patients per GP' and General Practice Workforce vacancy rate for 'General Practitioners (GPs).' In Wokingham there were 1494 patients per GP compared to the average for England of 1364 patients per GP. This information was updated on a six monthly basis. The vacancy rate for GPs as at March was 6%. Board members were advised that

many practices in the Borough were also employing other types of professionals such as pharmacists and paramedics.

- It was clarified that the direction of travel for the 'Delayed transfers of care' measure should be shown as an increasing instead of decreasing. Councillor Haitham Taylor suggested that context could be added to the direction of travel section in future to add further clarity.
- Councillor Bray noted that 'House Prices' were measured and requested that information be provided regarding rent rates.
- Some Board members asked that the commentary be included with the heading for the individual measures.

RESOLVED: That the Health and Wellbeing dashboard be noted.

38. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Board discussed the Forward Programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- The Chairman reminded the Board that there would be a breakfast meeting on 31st October 8.45am to discuss refreshing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Judith Ramsden indicated that she would bring an update on the Disability Strategy to the December meeting as opposed to the SEND Self-Assessment & Action Plan.
- A Health and Wellbeing Board Manager had not yet been appointed.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be noted.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 27 OCTOBER 2016 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.15 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Keith Baker (Chairman), Julian McGhee-Sumner, Mark Ashwell, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Pauline Jorgensen, Anthony Pollock, Malcolm Richards and Angus Ross

Other Councillors Present

Prue Bray
Richard Dolinski
Lindsay Ferris
Clive Jones
Beth Rowland
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

61. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

62. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 29 September 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

63. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Anthony Pollock declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 66, Expansion of Optalis, a Company Wholly-Owned by Wokingham Borough Council, by virtue of the fact that he was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of Optalis. Councillor Pollock left the meeting during discussions and did not vote on the matter.

Councillor Pauline Jorgensen declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 67, Council Owned Companies Business, by virtue of the fact that her husband was a paid Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillor Jorgensen remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor Anthony Pollock declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 67, Council Owned Companies Business, by virtue of the fact that he was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of Optalis. Councillor Pollock remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor Keith Baker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 73, Woodley Town Centre (North Precinct) Improvement Programme, by virtue of the fact that he was the Leader of Woodley Town Council who were involved in and likely to provide funding for the project.

64. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

**64.1 Peter Humphreys asked the Leader of the Council the following question:
Question**

The negotiations with Aldi to secure a supermarket to anchor the proposed Elms Field development are taking an inordinately long time. Bearing in mind the recent publicity surrounding the Irish government giving state aid to Apple through tax breaks would the Leader of the Council please confirm that WBC in its desperation to secure a deal will not be providing financial incentives of any kind to get a supermarket on Elms Field? I use the term "council" to include any companies it controls and "incentives" in its broadest meaning to include rents below market value, rent-free periods etc. and other creative inducements or concessions. A lot of public money is at stake and thus it is important that the people of Wokingham are assured we are not subsidising a commercial company.

Answer

Desperation is a rather an emotional word. There is absolutely no way that this Council is desperate in the way you propose in your question.

The negotiations with the potential food store operator are progressing well and in line with the project programme. The terms being discussed are aligned with the Letting Strategy adopted by the Executive, which is very much based on current market value. As you would expect I am unable to go into detail on this matter but any incentives being discussed are wholly in line with market requirements and will achieve the 'market value'.

Supplementary Question

Obviously you are using the commercially confidential clause to sort of conceal information from your fellow councillors and the public but it is already in the public domain; albeit hard to locate that 15 shops and restaurants have been given free rent periods and that the cinema fit-out is, and I quote, "a loss leader". It is also publicly known that incentives have been given to the Premier Inn as well as to Aldi so the more pertinent question is probably if no financial incentives are given to the potential commercial tenants of Elms Field would the proposed budget cuts and increased charges for refuse disposal not necessarily be appropriate or approximately how many social housing units could be constructed with that money?

Supplementary Answer

The fact is that the market requirements dictate certain actions and we are doing those actions and we are not doing anything different than anybody else in this area.

64.2 Keith Malvern asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

The Prime Minister and local MP Theresa May has said there should be "good school places for all" but has also said that she would like to introduce more grammar schools. What discussions has the current Executive Member had with Officers on the subject of grammar schools?

Answer

I answered a very similar question in the September Full Council meeting. Prior to that there had been discussion in a couple of my regular meetings with Children's Services leaders which followed some correspondence before the recent announcements. At that point I asked Officers to draw together a short briefing paper (which has now been superseded by the current events).

After Justin Greening's announcement we did discuss this topic again and I am sure you will have expected as much. However, the conversation was fairly brief as we concluded that until the Government released the final detail any conclusions we came to would, of course, be hypothetical.

Discussions with Officers touched on the Sevenoaks example which didn't fit our circumstances but also looked at the potential for a change in the law. Now we know that the Government has launched consultation on possible changes, including expansion of grammar schools, establishment of new ones and changes of status for existing non-selective schools.

In full Council in September I said the starting point was that Wokingham's comprehensive, maintained and academy schools are amongst the best in the country. Pupils do well here and this year's results show that yet again.

In Wokingham I believe that we are always prepared to look carefully at different ways of doing things. If there is to be a change in the law, following the current consultation, this might be a change in the balance of pros and cons. However, it wouldn't change my sense that we want to work with all of our schools and we're interested in our education system as a whole. Taking collectively the added value in our comprehensive schools, they are amongst the very best in the country, the Wokingham system is hard to beat.

Wokingham children here do brilliantly. Our schools achieve that for our local children and metaphorically I take my hat off to all of them.

Supplementary Question

I am pleased though that you accept the principle in my question – a good school place for all. The excellence for all approach. I am surprised and disappointed that ahead of any change in the law so much discussion has already gone on with the subject of grammar schools. I think that is very premature and obviously bearing in mind the challenges that the Government already faces I would have thought it would have been wise to wait until we have some certainties rather than the certainties of a speech at the party conference to rely on.

I also wonder whether in the discussions that you have had you have paid any attention to the words of our friend, everybody's friend, Sir Michael Wilshaw the Head of Ofsted quoted here as saying "a new wave of grammar schools is socially divisive and will lower the standards for the majority of pupils"?

Supplementary Answer

I do believe that we should aim for excellence for all and I think Wokingham is very good at that. Discussions so far, as I have said, have not been very much in depth. There was a small paper that we drew together but that was not with the paper in mind or the consultation in mind that has recently come out. We do not want to hypothesise about what will happen and that is the wrong thing to do and so for Sir Michael Wilshaw's quote about it being socially divisive. We need to make sure that all of our schools are providing an excellent education for all and we will take all of the pros and all of the cons in this consultation forward when we put in our submission.

65. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

65.1 Richard Dolinski asked the Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance the following question:

Question:

Can the Executive Member confirm whether ethnicity is a factor used to calculate the level of funding the Council receives from central Government?

Answer

I can confirm that ethnicity is one of the many factors used in assessing the needs formulae for our funding from Government. I should be clear in stating that ethnicity is not based on skin colour alone. At a previous meeting of the Executive, I was asked about our funding settlement, during which I stated that one of the reasons that we receive a low level of funding was because the Borough is “too white”. This was a poor choice of words on my part. What I had meant to convey was that the Borough’s lack of ethnic diversity means that the needs formulae calculate a lower settlement for us, once all of the many other factors are brought into account. I apologise for not having chosen my words more carefully.

Supplementary Question

In light of your answer would the Executive Member agree that trying to use this as an issue to stoke up racial tensions for political gain is morally reprehensible?

Supplementary Answer

Yes I do.

65.2 Clive Jones asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

At the last Executive meeting Cllr Pollock replied to a question about why Wokingham Borough Council got such a poor deal from central government with the words...”the simple answer is, we are too wealthy and too white”.

Would you agree with me that this statement was inappropriate, inaccurate, divisive and very misleading?

Answer

I think that Councillor Pollock has already dealt with this issue as you have heard.

65.3 Lindsay Ferris asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Agenda Item 66, Expansion of Optalis, A Company Wholly-Owned by WBC

Can you advise the main differences between this approach and more conventional shared service arrangements?

Answer

The key difference is that Optalis is a limited company, with directors registered at Companies’ House. A shared service is simply an arrangement agreed between two or more councils to provide that service through a single managed team, rather than do it separately within each council.

In this model The Royal Borough acquires 45% of the shares of the company and the company more than doubles in size increasing its resilience, its foothold in the market, and its ability to recruit and retain staff as you move from two councils trying to find staff to one

organisation trying to find staff. Both councils share the risks and the benefits of the new company as it grows and delivers services to both councils, and beyond, to other authorities and to private clients as well.

Supplementary Question

We note that The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has a target of between £1.8m and £2m in the reduction of costs of delivery of these adult social services over the next three years. Does the Optalis merged company, as I call it, pick up any debt arising out of any shortfall in achieving this target?

Supplementary Answer

Absolutely not.

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

Question

Agenda Item 74, Acquisition Of Property (Toutley Cottage) To Enable Provision Of The North Wokingham Distributor Road

Why do you say that there is no impact on the Winnersh Relief Road despite a reduction of over £300k in budget with no future additions planned to cover this shortfall?

Answer

The sum allocated to the Winnersh Relief Road (WRR) project was chosen at an early stage to ensure full coverage for most expected situations. That sum has since been identified as being in excess of requirements and is therefore considered surplus cash on the WRR project. As a sum of money is now required elsewhere in the Northern Distributor Road the excess sum from the WRR allocation has been taken from that figure and does not therefore jeopardise in any way the money available to the WRR.

Supplementary Question

Since we are the lowest funded, but ethnically diverse, Council in the land I am sure that no one would appropriate £300k for nothing. How are we going to replace this money and what are we not going to do because of this? You said that there was not going to be something but what are you planning on not doing?

Supplementary Answer

As I said at the beginning it was a fairly large project and we have put a large number into it and that has found to be in excess of all expected anticipation and that is why it has been transferred by something known as a virement to another project in the related area. We do not anticipate having to put anything back or make up any numbers because it was an excess sum.

65.5 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance the following question:

Question

With the Revenue Monitoring report showing a current year projected overspend of £494K, which represents approximately the equivalent of a Council Tax rise of 0.5%, will this not put added pressure on meeting service needs in 2017/18?

Answer

The short answer is yes and I will not get into trouble for that. The detail is as follows. A key purpose of the budget monitoring is to inform our budget plans for the following year.

This counts for both overspends and underspends. The budget overspends revealing themselves in this years' budget monitoring are in respect of the usual suspects; statutory demand lead services. Although we will continue to do all we can to contain these pressures this is often the best we can do, at least in the short term. They will therefore inevitably add to the spending pressures in 17/18 along with the other large budget challenges we face; such as losing a large slice of Government Grant.

We will therefore need to apply our usual level of financial diligence and service innovation in formulating our proposals for 17/18 and setting a balanced budget.

Supplementary Question

In July the overspend was forecast at £354k. You identified the two usual suspect areas. Other areas have managed to make savings so the underlying pressure in those two areas is even worse than is reflected. What are you going to do to pull this back?

Supplementary Answer

I think given that substantial amounts of this excessive expenditure is either on homelessness or looked after children I suspect in the current year it is probably very difficult to pull them back but I am sure that Charlotte will do all she can and Julian will do all he can to do that. As we look at next year's budgets the base level of spending in those areas, if it is as it is currently, then we are going to have to find a way of financing it because they are, as I said, demand led services to vulnerable and needy parts of our population that as one-nation Conservatives we need to look after.

66. EXPANSION OF OPTALIS, A COMPANY WHOLLY-OWNED BY WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

(Councillor Anthony Pollock declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item)

The Executive considered a report setting out a proposal to expand Optalis, including a merger with The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM), which could lead to Optalis delivering all of RBWM's Adult Social Care Services.

Following a query by the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing the Leader of Council confirmed that he and the Chief Executive would only sign-off the proposal once they were completely satisfied with the business case from both sides.

Councillor Haitham Taylor asked if consideration had been given to widening the membership of the proposed Company Board to include stakeholders eg service users and social workers. Councillor McGhee-Sumer confirmed that although there was a proposed composition of the Board the intention was to get the Board set up and then give further consideration to the membership of it.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Merger Model be approved as a template to use in developing the Business Case for the merger with The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) which will lead to Optalis Ltd. delivering all of the Royal Borough's Adult Social Care Services;
- 2) authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive to oversee the detailed business case development and ensure that Wokingham Borough Council's interests as shareholder are safeguarded;

- 3) in the event the business case is acceptable to all parties (WBC, RBWM, Optalis Ltd) to approve commencement of implementation of the business case to enable a 'go-live' target for the merged company of April 2017;
- 4) the Leader and Chief Executive report back to Executive in January and March, updating on progress, and before then in the event matters arise in the business case requiring Executive attention.

67. COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES' BUSINESS

(Councillors Pauline Jorgensen and Anthony Pollock declared personal interests in this item)

The Executive considered a report setting out the budget monitoring position for the month 31 August 2016 and an operational update for the period to 30 September 2016. It was noted that in order to assist Optalis manage its cash flow requirements a short term loan facility of £350k was being proposed.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 31 August 2016 be noted;
- 2) the operational update for the period to 30 September 2016 be noted;
- 3) the short term loan facility for Optalis Limited of £350k, charged at base rate plus 5.5% be approved.

68. REVENUE MONITORING 2016/17 - SEPTEMBER 2016

The Executive considered a report setting out the forecast outturn position of the revenue budget and the level of forecast balances in respect of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Schools Block and the Authority's investment portfolio.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance went through the report and highlighted that the Council was currently looking at a projected overspend of around £500k and children's placements and homelessness were areas of concern. Councillor Pollock confirmed that it was hoped that some of this overspend would be clawed back by the end of the year.

With regard to the Housing Revenue Account Members were informed that this was currently showing a projected underspend of around £38k. The Schools Block was showing a deficit of £341k however when taking into account the reserves for that area an overall surplus was showing.

In relation to the Children's Services Budget Councillor Haitham Taylor asked for media assistance in promoting the fact that if more permanent social workers and foster carers, who lived in the Borough, could be recruited this would assist with the current budget pressures.

Councillor McGhee-Sumner provided an update on discussions which had been held with the Department of Health to try and gain additional funding to support the change in eligibility criteria. He advised that it now appeared that no additional funding would be forthcoming for Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils therefore both councils were considering reinstating the judicial review. Legal opinion was currently awaited on the likelihood of the review being successful.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the forecast outturn position of the revenue budget and the level of forecast balances in respect of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Schools Block and the Authority's investment portfolio be noted;
- 2) the potential carry forward requests as per Appendix B of the report be noted.

69. CAPITAL MONITORING 2016/17 - END OF SEPTEMBER 2016

The Executive considered a report setting out the current position of the Capital budget.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance advised the meeting that there had been very little change since the last report and the budget was on line with expectations.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Capital Monitoring report for 2nd quarter of 2016/17, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- 2) the reduction in planned capital expenditure from £149,075k to £94,842k in 2016/17 as a result of re-profiling be noted;
- 3) it be approved and noted that the overall value of the capital programme has increased due to the receipt of the following ring fenced capital grants, being:-
 - i) Thames Valley Growth Deal to build National Cycle Network in the area;
 - ii) Disabled Facilities Grant ring fenced into the Better Care Fund.

70. LEISURE STRATEGY

The Executive considered a report containing a draft Leisure Strategy. It was noted that if agreed the Leisure Strategy would go out to public consultation for an eight week period. The views expressed during the consultation would then be considered by the Executive in January 2017 with a view to the Strategy being ratified.

The Executive Member for Environment informed Members that the Leisure Strategy sat between the Council's Vision and other strategies, including the Local Plan, and positioned the Council's leisure involvement as part of health and wellbeing; which in turn had a positive impact on residents of all ages. The intention was to provide all residents with the opportunity to be active but not at the expense of local council tax payers. Maintaining leisure centre provision would also allow the Council to move forward on a new contract to provide leisure facilities.

RESOLVED: That the draft Leisure Strategy proceed to an eight week period of public consultation and return for ratification by Executive in January 2017, when the views expressed in the consultation would be taken into account.

71. LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT OPTIONS

The Executive considered a report setting out options for the future management of the Council's leisure centres.

The Executive Member for Environment advised that the current contract was due to expire in April 2018 and there was therefore a need to agree the option for acquiring a new contract. Councillor Ross went through the four options, including their advantages and

disadvantages, as outlined in the report and advised that the preferred option was to tender for a new contract to manage the facilities with the ability to add further facilities over the period if required. Within the preferred contract there were different types of contract which could be used and the one that was being proposed was similar to the current contract i.e. a leisure operating contract which would allow the contractor to focus on delivery of the Council's key objectives. This would enable construction of any new facilities to be separate from the contract but once up and running they could then be included in the operating contract.

The preferred option would also enable the incorporation of the Arborfield gym from 2018 and the possibility of incorporating Ryeish Green if required.

Councillor Haitham Taylor was keen that social and public health outcomes would be included in the new contract scope as well as outreach programmes as she felt it was essential that there was a tie-in with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the outcomes included therein. Councillor Haitham Taylor also wanted the Council to consider how it could target specific groups that were known not to be accessing leisure activities eg people with disabilities etc.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) having considered the range of options for the future management of the Council's leisure centres the following recommendation be approved:
 - (a) Option D - To begin the procurement process for new leisure operating contracts;
 - (b) Option 2 – To procure these as Leisure Operating Contracts;
 - (c) The contracts will be 10 years in duration with an option for a 5 year extension.

- 2) having considered the range of options for contract scope the following recommendation be approved:
 - (a) The inclusion of specific public health and wellbeing outcomes;
 - (b) The flexibility to allow facilities owned by neighbouring Local Authorities to be added to the contract at a later date;
 - (c) That the Director of Health and Wellbeing and Executive Member for Environment are delegated to decide if pitch bookings, and Ryeish Green Site are included in the contract.

- 3) authority be delegated to the Director of Health and Wellbeing and Executive Member for Environment to approve the contract terms.

72. CORPORATE PEER REVIEW

The Executive considered a report containing the findings of the Corporate Peer Review, which was facilitated by the Local Government Association in February 2016, and the progress on the activities included in the subsequent action plan.

The Leader of Council informed the meeting that following the Corporate Peer Review report an action plan was developed to address those areas that had been highlighted as needing improvement. Councillor Baker was pleased with the findings of the review and the fact that the LGA was very impressed by many of the projects that the Council was working on.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the findings of the Corporate Peer Review report be noted; and
- 2) the progress in implementing improvement actions be noted.

73. WOODLEY TOWN CENTRE (NORTH PRECINCT) IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

(Councillor Keith Baker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item)

Councillor Julian McGhee-Sumner took the chair for this item.

The Executive considered a report setting out a scheme that included a number of small projects which would enhance the north end of Woodley precinct, drive up footfall and increase the potential for economic development.

The Executive Member for Environment went through the report and confirmed that at this stage the Executive was only being asked to agree the release of Woodley generated S106 money for the project and highlighted that there would also be much welcomed funding coming forward from Woodley Town Council, the Town Centre Management Initiative, and the Mary Portas Town Team.

Councillor Ross also advised the meeting that a number of local groups had been involved in the development of the scheme and it was expected that the work would be completed after Christmas in order that events during that period would not be at risk.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the £250,000 of Section 106 (s106) contributions (from Woodley developments only) be released to fund the regeneration proposals for Woodley Town Centre;
- 2) third party funding of £90,000 as outlined in the financial section of the report be approved.

74. ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY (TOUTLEY COTTAGE) TO ENABLE PROVISION OF THE NORTH WOKINGHAM DISTRIBUTOR ROAD

The Executive considered a report setting out the voluntary acquisition of Toutley Cottage in order to facilitate the route delivery of the North Wokingham Distributor Road (NWDR) required as traffic mitigation for the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location (NW-SDL).

It was noted that when the Executive had approved the final route of the NWDR it was agreed that Toutley Road would form the route between Old Forest Road and the Matthewsgreen development. A consequence of this was the need to acquire Toutley Cottage in order to construct the route.

Following a query by the Leader of Council it was confirmed that if there was a significant delay between the acquisition of the property and it being demolished, to make way for the road, the property would be utilised as housing stock.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the voluntary acquisition of Toutley Cottage be agreed as set out in the report;
- 2) the virement of £301k from the Winnersh relief road scheme be approved;

- 3) it be noted that there is no impact on the ongoing scheme and design to the Winnersh Relief Road as a result of this virement.

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It was suggested that the Local Authority intervene in the future to make sure that new schools' choice of name does not cause confusion with other schools and nurseries in the area.

The Chairman, David Babb advised that it was up to the governing body of any given school to choose their own name.

Piers Brunning, Service Manager Policy, Strategy and Partnerships confirmed that there had been some controversy with their choice of name and a final decision had taken longer than expected. It had now been agreed that the new school would be called Silver Meadows.

Piers reported that Floreat Trust was experiencing financial problems. Piers explained that small primary schools often did not have enough resources to support the large number of staff involved in a trust arrangement. The Local Authority was not part of this agreement, the DfE was responsible for trusts.

The Forum was informed that the school did not open in September and the Local Authority was seeking an alternative provider.

28. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29. CONSULTATION ON 2018/2019 ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES

The Forum considered the report which was set out on agenda pages 11-20 and the appendices attached to it. Piers Brunning, Service Manager, Policy, Strategy & Partnerships presented the report.

Piers pointed out that the main change proposed to the admissions arrangements for voluntary controlled and community schools and co-ordinated admissions schemes for 2018/19 was the move towards an entirely online process. The proposal to introduce a paperless process was driven by the 21 Century Council agenda in an effort to deliver good value for money.

Piers noted that it was expected that some families may need help and this would be offered by customer services.

The Chairman asked what was the percentage of online applications received this year. Piers was not sure of the exact numbers but stated that this was high, probably over 60%. Piers informed that the number of publications was reduced this year as more people were encouraged to use online services.

During the discussion of the item the following points were made:

- Councillor Rowland was concerned about the gap between the wealthier and the poorer families. She would like to know how people would know that they had to make an application online. Piers replied that the admissions team had already moved to customer services and would be helping people that weren't able to fill in online applications.

- Sue Runciman was concerned that schools had not been consulted about this. She reported that schools made allowances and helped children that were not able to do their homework online. Schools often helped parents when necessary.
- The Chairman stated that if a mistake was made in the application process with families that used the customer services, it would be difficult to argue the case if this came to a school admission appeal.
- Celia Thatcher, Grazeley CE Aided Primary Headteacher expressed concern that this would put additional pressure on the Local Authority, as it would create extra work to support families that may need help.
- Sue Runciman suggested that libraries may be able to offer advice and help to the community.
- Councillor Rowland was concerned about people with English as a second language as they may find this process more difficult.
- The Chairman stated that the help offered by customer services would be good for people that struggled to fill in forms.
- Piers reminded the Forum that this proposal related to 2018/19 arrangements.
- Councillor Dolinski stated that any transitions to new systems were likely to encounter difficulties in the first year, but he was confident that there would be enough people to help.
- Celia Thatcher stated that it would be helpful to spread the message to other Headteachers, so that the information could be shared with parents.
- The Chairman noted that the legislation did not specify if applications should be on paper or online. He questioned the legitimacy of denying a paper copy to parents if it came to a legal challenge. It remained to be seen how this would work in practice, but he was supportive of the idea.
- Piers pointed out that people were used to doing very many transactions online already.
- Edward Hunter asked if the Local Authority intended to link this with the Citizens Advice Bureau. Piers stated that the Local Authority supported their role and they may be able to help people to fill in their forms.
- Councillor Dolinski believed that libraries would play an important part in this process. He reported that Wokingham was increasing the libraries opening hours.
- It was noted that it would be a positive outcome if as a result of this people were more encouraged to visit the libraries.

David Babb pointed out that the date on page 13 of the agenda should be changed. Where it said *'The consultation runs from 9 December 2016 to 3 February 2017'* it should say *'The consultation runs from 9 December 2016 to 31 January 2017'*. Piers agreed that some dates contained in the report needed amending.

Piers stated that another significant change was the proposal that a fresh application would have to be made every academic year in order to continue on the waiting list. This was because sometimes people forgot to notify school admissions that they no longer wished their child's name to remain on the waiting list. It was hoped that this would speed up the process.

The following comments were made in relation to this proposal:

- The Forum asked how would be parents be informed of this change. Piers stated that parents would be informed when applying.
- David Babb recommended that the Local Authority wrote to parents to let them know that they needed to fill in a new application form to remain in the waiting list.

- Celia Thatcher worried that some parents may forget to apply.
- Sue Runciman confirmed that in her experience there could be problems with parents not realising that it was their responsibility to do certain things.

Piers reported that there may be an increase in the admission number of some primary schools in the Earley and Woodley areas. The schools involved were: Highwood, Beechwood, Loddon and Aldryngton.

There were difficulties in expanding the site at Aldryngton Primary due to its location. Aldryngton shared part of the site with Maiden Erlegh and the entrance was in a quiet residential road. There was ongoing work with architects and transport consultants on the feasibility of the project.

Piers informed that Maiden Erlegh was considering expanding its sixth form to accommodate pupils from Maiden Erlegh Reading.

Councillor Rowland asked what was meant by the statement on page 14 which said that there was sufficient capacity for all Earley resident children across all Earley schools. Piers explained that although there were sufficient places in the schools, the Local Authority could not reserve places in schools. There was also an issue with the location of certain schools, in that although the school building was located within the Wokingham boundaries, in practical terms the school was more accessible to Reading residents.

Piers explained that in view of these difficulties, the Local Authority was proposing to overlap the designated areas of Whiteknights into Radstock and Loddon into Aldryngton. Piers was still to speak to the schools involved. This proposal was subject to consultation and would only come into effect in 2018. David Babb reminded Piers of the timescales for the consultation process.

Piers tabled an updated paper relating to *home address*. Piers informed that the Local Authority conducted a number of checks to verify residency, including examining council tax, electricity bills and other records. However, there was still a challenge with people that rented a property for a limited period of time in the designated area of a particular school in order to obtain a place and then moved out. This type of fraud was very difficult to catch and to prevent.

David Babb stated that most Local Authorities did everything they could to minimise fraud, but no system would ever be completely fool-proof.

In response to a question Piers stated that this issue related to a small number of people. It was also important not to discriminate against people in rented accommodation.

Piers stated that the Local Authority would withdraw the place if it found out that the application had been fraudulent. It was clarified that a withdrawal could only take place up to the end of the first term, after that it was not in the best interests of the child to be moved to a different school.

Piers stated that there were no concerns with the split living arrangements.

Piers stated that it was hoped that mid-year applications would also be done entirely online in the future. There was ongoing work with Capita to develop this process. Also, it may be necessary to change the foundation process to mention 33 hours childcare.

Members of the Forum pointed to a grammatical mistake on page 32 of the agenda. There were also various issues with dates which Piers agreed needed correcting.

David Babb informed that it was quite likely that Sixth Form arrangements would not be included in the new School Admissions Code. However, it was not known when the government would announce a new Code.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

30. OWN ADMISSIONS AUTHORITY PROPOSALS

The Forum considered the report containing own admission authority proposals on pages 101-136 of the agenda.

David Babb stated that Earley St Peters CE was proposing to simplify its criteria; this had been suggested by the Diocese. He also informed that the Diocesan guidance was that there should not be church criteria as church schools should cater for everyone. However, the Diocese could not force schools to follow this guidance. It was up to the governors to decide on the criteria, but they were obliged to consult with the Diocese first.

David Babb informed that it was recommended that aided schools have a designated area; not having a designated area had created issues in the past.

David stated that schools should be encouraged to have their admissions criteria easily available on their websites. The schools adjudicator had pointed out that this was not always easy to find and school should make it easily available.

Councillor Rowland asked if children of staff had any priority in the application process. David explained that governing bodies could give priority to the children of certain staff as this was permitted by the School Admissions Code. David mentioned that there were known cases where children of staff were able to obtain a place but that children of the clergy could not be given priority simply because they were children of clergy resident in the catchment area.

Piers pointed out that this criterion was helpful when trying to attract teachers to an area where there may be a shortage of teachers of a certain subject for example.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

31. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting is scheduled for 11 January 2017.

The Forum discussed the membership and questioned if it was necessary for both Celia Thatcher and Sue Runciman to attend the meetings, given that they represented the same type of school. Piers felt that it was valid to have them both attending as it provided him with valuable feedback.

It was agreed that the Forum should seek to have a representative from one of the academies. Luciane Bowker would contact academy Headteachers about joining the Forum.

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