

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2018 FROM 6.30 PM TO 7.30 PM**

Committee Members Present

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

Other Councillors Present

Prue Bray
UllaKarin Clark
Gary Cowan
Lindsay Ferris
Michael Firmager
John Halsall
Clive Jones
Philip Mirfin
Ian Pittock
Malcolm Richards
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Chris Smith
Oliver Whittle

96. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

97. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 25 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader of Council.

98. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Norman Jorgensen declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 101 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that his wife was a paid Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillor Jorgensen remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillors David Lee and Stuart Munro declared personal interests in Agenda Item 101 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that they were paid Non-Executive Directors of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillors Lee and Munro remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

99. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

99.1 Paul Craddock had asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question. As Mr Craddock was unable to attend the meeting the following written response was provided to him:

Question

Given the focus on reducing plastic waste globally and given that in Bristol alone they will be installing 200, what is Wokingham Council's plan and timescale for the introduction of one or more plastic bottle refilling fountains in the newly regenerated town centre?

Answer

Water supplies are included within both Peach Place and Elms Field development. We will ensure that fountains are fitted to enable re-filling of plastic water bottle

99.2 Rachel Bishop-Firth asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

I understand that the Council and Network Rail have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a solution to the Tanhill Lane crossing, which currently has two separate bridges including a very steep and unsightly temporary bridge. Could the Council please outline what this Memorandum of Understanding contains including the responsibilities of each party and any agreed timescales?

The Council has previously stated that it is not the Council's responsibility to provide this bridge. Network Rail, on the other hand, are very clear that they see a permanent solution as being the responsibility of the Council and have stated to me in response to my questions to them that 'you will need to speak to the Council as it is their project to install the permanent bridge'.

Answer

The Memorandum of Understanding, the MOU, was signed off between Network Rail and the Borough Council in late 2016. It is quite a brief document only covering one A4 page. You asked what was contained in this document for "responsibilities" so I will quote from it exactly what it says. It is Section 3 Responsibilities:

"NR (that is Network Rail) will build and wholly fund and maintain a temporary stepped footbridge at Tan House level crossing to mitigate the current safety risks associated with crossing the railway on the level in that location until such time as a permanent solution is put in place." Which they have done.

"Network Rail and Wokingham Borough Council will collaborate on a permanent ramped footbridge solution upon the progression of development proposals for the multi storey car park and the life expiration of the existing stepped footbridge over the Gatwick to Reading line. The responsibilities of Network Rail and Wokingham Borough Council in respect of the permanent ramped footbridge will be subject to discussion once the development of the multi storey car park has been commenced."

So you can see that the development of the permanent ramped footbridge is not the sole responsibility on either the Council or Network Rail. It is a joint project between both organisations.

The next item is around costs which is Item 4.

"Network Rail will wholly fund the temporary stepped bridge."

WBC and NR will approach funding collaboratively in respect of the permanent ramped footbridge solution. The terms of the funding will be subject to discussion once the development of the multi storey car park has been commenced.”

As you can see once again it is not the sole responsibility of either Network Rail or the Council. It is the responsibility of both organisations and those joint discussions are continuing.

Supplementary Question

Yes we have got the multi storey car park in place now and I understand that the Council is going to be building a number of homes for sale on this site, and that does not include any social or affordable housing as I understand it. Could the CIL money for these houses be used to finance the building of a permanent bridge?

Supplementary Answer

Certainly that could be one option; no question. The biggest issue tends to be, for those of us who have worked with Network Rail, is that they are quite a bureaucratic organisation, worse than the Council, and it does take a long, long time to sort out the workings between Network Rail and anybody who is trying to work with them. But it could possibly be an option.

I will get back to you on timescales.

99.3 Derek Oxbrough asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:

Question

Are budget constraints responsible for the lack of routine care and maintenance of the road drains/gulleys in the WBC area and particularly within Barkham. Background: For the past 4 years Barkham Parish Council, as a matter of record, have been requesting that WBC solve the drainage issues in Barkham Road between Coppid Hill and the Barkham Brook bridge. This section of road has a short, but one of the steepest hills (approx. 1 in 8) in the Wokingham area and has a double “S” bend on the slope to make it even more dangerous. Because of blocked drains, particularly in the winter, heavy rain causes a huge amount of surface water in the form of a 2m wide stream causing any salt that been spread on the road to be quickly washed away. If a frost then follows the rain the road ices over with black ice which is impossible for motorists to detect, and could lead to serious injury or death. There have been two major accidents this winter and in the second one a young lady driver was injured and her car written off. This is a dangerous section of rural road, which has a narrow pavement, and a high brick wall that has to take a huge amount of traffic. This traffic flow will only increase with all the additional new housing in the Barkham area. An additional aggravating cause of these blocked drains/gulleys is the lack of supervision of the WBC contactors who are meant to clear the pavements and road sides of all the debris from soil, litter and oak trees etc. on a monthly basis. If this debris is not removed regularly, it ends up blocking the drains and their interconnecting pipework. Barkham Parish Council has continually requested for the street cleaning task to be done properly and taken seriously as the roads are often missed for months or only partly cleared. No one seems to monitor the contractor to make sure the job has been done properly. So are budget constraints responsible for the lack of routine street cleaning and maintenance of the road drains/gulleys and will WBC provide adequate funds to resolve this issue in the coming financial year?

Answer

You made quite a number of points there so hopefully I will address them all in the response. There are approximately 30,000 gullies in the Borough of Wokingham, all of which are included in the annual maintenance programme completed by the Council's contractor. In certain locations, including Barkham Road, where we know that there are historical drainage issues, the gullies are cleaned more frequently.

Officers monitor the routine maintenance works by auditing selected areas on a monthly basis, as well as using an online asset management system where they can track the gully emptier and review the condition and silt levels of the gullies. The current gully emptying contract is in its first year of operation so it is a new thing.

This section of Barkham Road is cleaned every four weeks and my information is that it was last cleaned on 8th February 2018 and it is next due to be cleaned on 8th March.

Officers are aware that there are historical flooding issues in this location, which have been exacerbated by a number of Thames Water drainage leaks in the last few years. For this reason, more detailed works have been carried out on several occasions to try and resolve the problems.

As you are aware, the most recent works have been carried out on the Barkham Road, between Barkham Street and School Road, over a three week period which began on 5th February 2018. This has involved ditch clearance, gully emptying and jetting, pipe extension, pipe replacement, outlet clearing, gully lid replacement and root cutting. It is hoped that this work will help reduce the problems you have mentioned.

There were also concerns about the drainage between Coppid Hill and Barkham Ride so that section was jet cleaned during this three week period to ensure it runs clear. As well as this, the contractor has cleared the ditch where the water in this system ends up. In addition to this our Officers have continuously put pressure on Thames Water to resolve the water leaks outside Barkham Manor and at the junction of Barkham Road and Bearwood Road. I understand that Thames Water are continuing to investigate.

There is a similar situation with a Thames Water leak near to the junction with School Road whereby water runs out of a BT manhole cover. Thames Water will be carrying out works to repair this leak within the next week.

Moving forward, a capital scheme will be required in this location to replace the existing drainage system but this will involve a significant amount of traffic disruption as well as having to conduct works on properties in the area. Therefore, our Drainage Officers are working collaboratively with other teams conducting other schemes so that they can programme these works.

Supplementary Question

Because you have just answered there that various bits would be dealt with and so forth but the most dangerous bit, which I believe should have been tackled first, is the hill. It is where the accidents occur, it is where a double bend is, and it is where ice forms. Yet you go and do other pieces that aren't so important on a straight piece of road in a much lesser hill. So I am not sure why that was.

But what I would like to know is when specifically is the question of the hill going to be sorted out? When will that be done bearing in mind that we are just about to have another load of frost over the next 10 days?

Supplementary Answer

All these works, I am sure, will help it is all about flowing water in the right places but specifically on the hill I will take that away and come back to you with a further answer.

99.4 Jack Beresford asked the Executive Member for Strategic Highways and Planning the following question:

Question

Can you please confirm that the proposed new Community Centre at Matthewsgreen will be operated in a manner that allows all members of our community to have full access to it, irrespective of race or religious beliefs?

Answer

I would like to give you reassurance that all community facilities provided by the Council are done so in accordance with the principles set out in the Shaping Our New Communities document and that is why community facilities have been built on each of our strategic development locations. This new community facility being built as part of the Matthewsgreen development will be available to everyone in the local community and indeed if you look at page 189 of tonight's agenda you will see in the final paragraph, first sentence, it states that (this is from the Kings Church submission): *"As a publicly-funded community space, the community centre would be open to all. We would aim to be fully inclusive of all community groups. We would not seek to exclude, or look to impose restrictions on, individuals or groups permitted to book the space."*

Further clarification came from one of the Church's senior members when he responded me and said *"Dear David. Further to our telephone conversation I can confirm that under the Equalities Act 2010 we would have to hire the community centre to any group that wanted it."* So he has confirmed that. This group is bringing great benefit to that area. They were the only ones that submitted a final bid and they have actually within the report you will see that they have likened it to the FBC Centre which is not branded as a church it is a community centre which is used for church services on Sundays. So it will be open to everyone.

Supplementary Question

When will this be expected to open for Emmbrook residents?

Supplementary Answer

We need to agree it tonight and it then has to go through a planning application as they are going to be putting in the region of £1m of their own money to increase the size of that facility which will be built as part of the developer contribution.

So in terms of when will it be open I would love to say next Monday morning at 9 o'clock but I think that would be a bit rash.

100. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

100.1 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Many residents live in areas which have week day parking restrictions designed to deter commuters and shoppers from parking on residential streets. They have been very surprised to be getting Parking Tickets on public holidays such as Boxing Day and New Year's Day when they are not at work and have family visiting.

Is it still really necessary to be issuing tickets on these days?

Answer

When Civil Parking Enforcement powers were introduced in October 2017 the previous police restrictions, including on bank holidays, were adopted by the Council. It is important to note that parking enforcement in this respect has not changed at all. The reason why many people believe this is the case is that the police, the former enforcement agency, due to other priorities never carried out planning enforcement. The Council is now in the process of reviewing the traffic orders across the 1,800+ roads we have to ensure that they are still effective and relevant to the traffic management policy but this is an extensive process and will not happen overnight.

Whilst it is unfortunate that residents have been issued Penalty Notices since the Council took on CPE powers, parking restrictions are clearly advertised on street and residents are expected to comply with these. If the signage is inaccurate or not clear then they should use that if they decide to lodge an appeal to the independent assessors. Now this point is very important as there is now a process and the Council cannot intervene on an individual's behalf as they could in the past. Clearly Officers will do their level best to carry out the review process mentioned previously but inevitably it is going to take time.

Supplementary Question

How would one go about getting these things reviewed and get them reviewed quickly because there are some areas obviously eg certain areas near the town when the shops were shut, and they were getting parking tickets on Boxing Day and things like this all of a sudden. I appreciate that it probably was already there.

Supplementary Answer

The issue is one of fairness. Because for the residents you are talking about I can probably site another 20, 30, or 40 roads who will say exactly the same so therefore we need to do that in a very systematic priority based way which means we can't actually, or we shouldn't, prioritise one road over another.

100.2 Michael Firmager asked the Executive Member for Adults' Services the following question:

Question

Regarding the Council Housing List, please can you advise what has been the reduction in numbers with particular regard to Band A, which concerns the people with most need?

Answer

Between January and December 2017 we were able to re-house 138 people from the priority Band One. People in Band One include those where we have accepted a homeless duty, those with urgent medical and social priority, and those who need to move due to reasons of regeneration of social housing.

Although Band One remains at a constant level of between 70 and 80 applicants at any one time due to new households joining, people moving into the Borough or people existing within the Borough, activity in rehousing people in urgent housing need progresses well and those with priority are rehoused in a timely manner that reflects how urgent their housing need may be. For example I met a young lady only last week. She came into Shute End to collect her keys. She was made homeless only 3½ months ago.

Supplementary Question

I was just wondering what the future plans are to further reduce the Council housing list?

Supplementary Answer

We are going to continue to work with our Council owned housing companies and we are going to deliver innovative solutions to meet the demand for housing and that is going to grow and work with our housing association partners to deliver homes in strategic locations. And as such I am pleased to say that we are on target to provide around 500 new affordable homes this coming year many of which will be social homes where the rent is capped at 60% of the market value.

100.3 Chris Smith asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

In February 2017 Reading Borough Council installed parking meters on Pepper Lane in what had previously been free parking spaces. These parking spaces were used by students and staff at Reading University who did not have allocated parking spaces. This has meant that parking from Reading University has been forced further down Pepper Lane and into the residential areas off Elm Road and Wilderness Road. This is causing a problem for residents in these areas as the extra cars parked are restricting residents' access.

Although additional parking enforcement patrols have occurred in the affected areas, if the cars are not parked illegally no enforcement action or parking tickets can be issued. Any changes will require a majority of residents in a street to opt for additional restrictions such as yellow lines for them to be introduced.

What warning was received by Wokingham Borough Council over these proposed changes?

Answer

The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996 Part 2 Section 6 gives details of those that should be consulted and in this case we should have been included. It says "*when the order relates to, or appears to, the order making authority to be likely to affect traffic on a road for which another authority is the highway authority or the traffic authority.*" Clearly, as you describe, this has had a direct impact on Earley wards in Wokingham Borough. Having searched our computer records we do not have any record of any consultation re Pepper Lane.

The Officer in charge of parking has asked Reading Parking Services, who would be responsible for the work, to confirm if they did consult with us and request they provide a copy of the consultation and response if they did. I have not yet had a response.

Supplementary Question

Will you work with me to get this sorted for my residents in Hillside and across the rest of Earley whether that means increased parking restrictions or rolling back what Reading attempted to do on Pepper Lane?

Supplementary Answer

When it comes to anything under our control absolutely yes we can work together. When it comes back to Reading Borough Council those of us who have tried to get the traffic lights removed up at Shinfield know what an uphill struggle that is.

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

Question

Although Wokingham Borough is generally a safe place to live. There has been a spike in the number of burglaries recently.

What can be done to reduce the number of burglaries in and around the Borough and particularly the Earley and Lower Earley area?

Answer

The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to work in partnership with the Police, Health Bodies, Probation and the Fire Service to reduce crime and disorder in their local areas.

Much of this work is carried out through the Community Safety Partnership, a high level body that takes a strategic approach to crime reduction by developing and implementing action plans, holding the police to account on performance, commissioning crime reduction related services and operations based on intelligence. Working in this way has helped Wokingham achieve and maintain the lowest crime rates in the country.

There has been a recent spike in residential burglary in the Thames Valley, and Wokingham Borough has been particularly affected. Currently the increase is around 12%, which is the fourth highest increase in the area.

To address this the Council is working with the Police to: communicate crime prevention advice enabling residents to better protect themselves against becoming victims, using any regulatory powers in particular to improve the security of flats or houses in multiple occupation for example, making sure that lighting in communal areas meets the standards and supports the Police in their investigations by sharing relevant information.

Burglary reduction is a priority and performance is monitored at the fortnightly Police Tasking Meeting attended by the Community Safety Partnership Manager as well as the bi-monthly Community Safety Partnership Board Meeting.

Supplementary Question

Residents are particularly concerned about the spike in burglaries. Will you work with me to ensure that funds are available to erect new street lighting and trim the hedgerows in urban areas such as Earley and Lower Earley should the police feel that these measures would assist them with crime prevention and as we are short of time tonight a simple yes or no would be fine?

Supplementary Answer

I am not going to commit specific funds to this because I am not sure that is necessary to prevent this but I think that we should go to the Community Safety Partnership and ask them what are the things that they deem necessary for the prevention of these crimes.

Like you have raised specific things in your ward I also have seen a specific rate increase as well in my ward and it is actually particularly in new housing which I think is particularly odd. I think that one of the things we need to concentrate on is people understanding how they can secure their own homes and I think we need to take precautions around alarms. People are deterred from breaking in when they see an alarm, when they see good locks on windows, when they see cameras. There are lots of different methods that people can employ and lots of them. Hedge cutting is perhaps one of them but that is not the only thing and I think we can explore these things together and some of that doesn't include the Council spending lots of money on it. So I would like to have a discussion outside this meeting about how we can tackle this.

100.5 Ian Pittock asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

The Executive Member for Highways will be aware of the promised plan to build a cycleway down the Nine Mile Ride from Gorse Ride South to Park Lane which has been delayed due to the necessary extra Highway's land to be added to the existing footway having been encroached upon by residents and there is some reluctance to tackle these residents despite this being in the interests of the wider community. Bohunt students are already cycling along the footway. There is now a welcome plan to build new bus stops, shelters and a light controlled pedestrian crossing at the entrance to California Country Park. There is Highway's owned grass land at this point suitable for the eastbound shelter and the bus stop itself could be placed a little further east so as not to cause a traffic issue at the entrance. Why, therefore, is it felt necessary to place both the bus stop and the shelter on the existing footway so causing another obstruction in the way of building the cycleway adding this to the fact that you have not yet placed a marker down by writing to the offending residents; what message are you sending to the wider community?

Answer

You will recall that you were a participant in meetings with all Councillors in April 2017 where this issue of cyclists and Nine Mile Ride were discussed at great length. At the end of that meeting a proposal was put forward, and accepted by Finchamptead Councillors to assist cyclists and wider access to the school. It was agreed the Nine Mile Ride route would be installed as a safe walking route to the school, aligned to the s106 planning obligations of the new school which were delivered on time and on budget. It was agreed that the California Park Greenway route, delivered in Summer 2017, would be upgraded to provide lighting to assist users including cyclists to use this alternative off road route. Cyclists especially child cyclists will always tell you, and their parents will tell you, that providing an off-road cycling route is infinitely safer than a route alongside a very, very busy main road with many house access points crossing it. Councillor Simon Weeks has worked on behalf of residents to enable the provision of these much needed bus shelters and improved safer road crossing at this point.

The proposed bus stops and crossing points with drop kerbs on Nine Mile Ride near California Country Park have been carefully designed at locations where buses can access them safely and they are accessible and convenient for those walking to access the bus service. Moving the bus stops as you propose would introduce road safety issues.

The available highway width at the designed stop locations requires the shelters to be located on the footway, and I confirm the proposals comply with the nationally recognised inclusive mobility guidance for highway users including vulnerable users and I come back to the point that an off-road, a significantly off-road cycle route, will always be far, far better than one that is right next to a busy road.

Supplementary Question

Is not the real truth that you do not intend dealing with highways encroachments and the message to residents is to grab as much highways land as they possibly can?

Supplementary Answer

No the message is not that. There is alternative work going on across the whole Borough looking at that issue right across. But to bring that into the cyclist is, I think, inappropriate.

100.6 Gary Cowan asked the Executive Member for Finance the following question: Question

How does the Council general fund reserve for this financial year compare with that of the previous five years?

Answer

The balances have reduced significantly since March 2017 as the result of sizeable supplementary estimates approved in year, such as the work needed for the Local Plan Update and the in-year overspend in People's Services. Although £7m is a safe balance, as evidenced by the budget risk analysis work, it is however on the low side of the safe range. Work will be undertaken throughout the year and the next year to build the general reserves back towards previous levels by measures that contain within budgets or generating supplementary income sources.

Supplementary Question

Forgetting about our past Icelandic ventures, and not forgetting David Lee reminding us all the time about being the worst funded council in England, can you assure me that allowing for some risk in investment our resources are being put in the best possible way to get the best possible return for the Council?

Supplementary Answer

Absolutely. We analyse all our spend and that is in line with Council policy.

100.7 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

Wokingham Borough Council placed a full page advert on page 22 of the Bracknell and Wokingham Weekender newspaper on February 8th, giving notice of variation in the car park charges. But no decision to make the change to the car park charges had been made. That decision is about to be made at this Executive meeting, two weeks after the advert went out. I am not objecting to the proposals in any way but I am concerned that by advertising without waiting for a formal decision, the Council has not followed the correct process or its own Constitution, and could find itself in difficulties as a result of not following the rules. Will you undertake to make sure that in future the Council follows the correct statutory procedure for giving notice of highways and parking changes?

Answer

Given the success of the Woodley Car Parking Trial I was keen to see other Council residents benefit from the changes to the tariff regime, especially the suspension of evening and Sunday charges as soon as possible, so we have tried to accelerate the programme for this approach to be rolled out Borough wide. Officers have completed the task of preparing a report for this Executive in an extremely short period of time, almost unprecedented, to which I am very, very grateful to them. Especially as there is a strong link between this trial and a further extension of the “free after three” offer. Unfortunately, this resulted in a premature advert being placed in this newspaper. Please accept my apology for any confusion that this has caused but it has given us a insight of residents’ views on this which we are currently collating.

The proposal will be considered by tonight’s meeting of the Executive and if approved it will be advertised again for a minimum of 21 days before the tariff changes are implemented in accordance with statutory procedure.

Supplementary Question

That advert two weeks ago was placed in the Bracknell and Wokingham Weekender newspaper which is only read by a small section of the Borough. Can you explain why you put it in that paper and not in the Wokingham paper which is read across the whole Borough and not just that one corner of it?

Supplementary Answer

I cannot but I will get the answer and get back to you.

100.8 John Halsall asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:**Question**

Many years ago, together we planned and delivered a traffic calming and parking scheme for Wargrave High Street. It was innovative and controversial but solved both problems.

It has been extremely successful and a very delicate compromise. The solution was dependent upon the availability of the School Lane Car Park. With the new charging regime of Evening and Sunday charges, parking has spilled over into every available nook and cranny close to the High Street. CPE has and will exacerbate this.

It is therefore with considerable gratitude that you are proposing to eliminate night time and Sunday charging. A very big thank you. Will this happen immediately?

Answer

If agreed by the Executive, the proposed changes to allow free evening and Sunday/Bank Holiday charges will be implemented as soon as possible. There is a statutory minimum advertisement period of 21 days post the decision and ‘Call In’ period. The new charges will be put in place after this and are planned to commence on 2nd April 2018 for a one year trial period.

Supplementary Question

Can we now turn our attention to the project of the community transfer of the car park to the Parish Council which has stalled. The Parish Council would continue to host recycling and other Borough facilities but it would enable the Parish Council to reopen the toilets which it wants to do.

Supplementary Answer

As you know I am only recently in the post but I am absolutely willing to work together to see what is appropriate going forward.

101. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2018/21

The Executive considered a report setting out the proposed Housing Revenue Account budget for 2018/19 which included proposed rent levels for council housing and council-owned garages. The budget takes account of forecast economic changes and movements in interest rates using relevant available information from various sources, including the Council's treasury advisors.

The Executive Member for Finance introduced the report and proposed the following amendment to recommendation 7 which he stated reflected changes in charges across other areas:

"Sheltered room guest charges to be increased from £9.00 to £9.50 per night effective from April 2018." This was agreed by the Executive.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to approve:

- 1) The Housing Revenue Account budget;
- 2) Council house dwelling rents be reduced by 1% effective from April 2018 in line with the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015;
- 3) Garage rents be increased by 3.6% effective from April 2018 in line with Council fees and charges;
- 4) Shared Equity Rents will be increased by 3.85% based on September RPI, effective from April 2018;
- 5) Tenant Service Charges are set in line with estimated costs;
- 6) The Housing Major Repairs (capital) programme for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix C;
- 7) Sheltered room guest charges to be increased from £9.00 to £9.50 per night effective from April 2018.

102. CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND STRATEGY 2018/21

The Executive considered a report setting out a proposed Capital Programme and Strategy 2018/21. The Capital Strategy provides a framework within which the Council's capital investment plans would be delivered and has been prepared to cover a 10 year time frame from 2018/19 to 2028.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to:

- 1) approve the Capital Programme and Strategy for 2018/21, as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- 2) note the draft vision for capital investment over the next 10 years, as set out in Appendix B to the report; and

- 3) approve the developer contributions S106 and CIL as set out in Appendix C to the report. The S106 and CIL values are estimated and approval is sought up to the scheme budget.

103. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/21

The Executive considered a report setting out a proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19. The report sets out the expected treasury activity for the forthcoming year and includes prudential indicators relating specifically to Treasury Management for the next three years.

RESOLVED that Council be recommended to approve the following:

- 1) Capital Prudential Indicators, 2018/19;
- 2) Borrowing Strategy 2018/19;
- 3) Annual Investment Strategy 2018/19;
- 4) Flexible use of capital receipts strategy;
- 5) MRP policy; and
- 6) Treasury Indicators: limits to borrowing activity 2018/19.

104. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2018/21 - REVENUE BUDGET SUBMISSION 2018/19

The Executive considered a report setting out the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2018/21, which covers both the revenue and capital budgets required to deliver the priorities of the Council over the next three years, and the Revenue Budget Submission for 2018/19.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2018/21, including the budget submission for 2018/19.

105. SHAREHOLDERS' REPORT

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

The Executive considered a report which provided the budget monitoring position of the Council owned companies and an operational update for the period to 31 December 2017.

Councillor Lee highlighted the predicted forecast outturns for Wokingham Housing Limited of £850k and Berry Brook Homes Limited of £142k and the small loss from Loddon Homes. The Leader of Council congratulated the housing companies on the amount of funds they had generated and also for delivering over 120 affordable homes

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 31 December 2017 be noted;
- 2) the operational update for the period to 31 December 2017 be noted.

106. BOROUGH WIDE PARKING CHARGES

The Executive considered a report setting out proposals for Borough Wide Parking Charges.

The Executive Member for Highways and Transport advised the meeting that he wished to amend all the dates in the recommendations to 2nd April.

In introducing the report Councillor Baker advised Members that as a result of the successful Woodley car parking trial it was proposed to extend this across all Council car parks that charged a one hour parking fee for a trial period of one year. Allied to the extra 10p on the one hour charge the evening and Sunday charging would be suspended. In order to go seamlessly from the “free after three” to the introduction of the trial the dates had been aligned. It was noted that the Winnersh and Earley station car parks would not be affected.

Councillor Baker wanted to make Members aware that every area was different with a different profile and therefore although the scheme worked in Woodley it would not necessarily work in other areas. A 12 month trial would provide the opportunity to assess the viability of the scheme.

In response to a query Councillor Baker confirmed that the changes would be clearly advertised to avoid any confusion.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the extension of the ‘Free after 3’ scheme within Wokingham Town Centre until 2nd April 2018 be approved;
- 2) a supplementary estimate for £36,000 for 2017/18 to cover the cost of lost income during the extended period for ‘Free after 3’ be approved;
- 3) a 1 year trial (from 2nd April 2018) to increase the 1 hour parking charge from 70p to 80p in the Wokingham car parks (Carnival MSCP, Elms Road MSCP, The Paddocks, Easthampstead Road East and West, Cockpit Path, Denmark Street and Wellington House and Rose Street temporary car park) be approved. Approve a trial (from 2nd April 2018) to increase the 1 hour parking charge from 40p to 50p in Polehampton Close Car Park in Twyford and School Lane Car Park in Wargrave;
- 4) from 2nd April 2018, suspend the evening and Sunday charging in all car parks (in Wokingham Borough (except Station Road Earley and Winnersh Triangle Rail Station) until the trial results are considered;
- 5) the range of estimated financial implications with regard to the trial period for WBC car parks in the borough (excluding station car parks) of between a £65,000 deficit to a £100,000 surplus be noted and that the specific budget requirement (if any) will be requested at a future Executive following an assessment of the impact;
- 6) Officers be instructed to amend signing and equipment in the car parks as required;
- 7) the results of the trial will be brought back to Executive for a longer term decision to be made regarding car parking charges in the Borough.

107. TEMPORARY CLOSURE REMENHAM 4

The Executive considered a report relating to an application for temporary closure of Footpath Remenham No 4 to allow the Henley Festival to be organised and run in a safe manner whilst enabling residents and visitors to continue to use the Footpath via a short detour.

The Executive Member for Environment advised the meeting that the proposal was for the temporary closure of the footpath during the set-up, breakdown and running of the Henley Festival.

Due to the fact that an application was received every year Councillor Weeks queried whether there was a possibility that for future years the recommendation could cover a longer period eg two or three years? Councillor Jorgensen agreed to look into this to ascertain if this was a possibility.

Councillor Baker advised that from previous experience of the matter he didn't believe that the item actually needed to be considered by the Executive but because of the interest in the application it had been felt that it would be appropriate for it to be considered by the Executive in order to have it discussed in a public forum.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the making of an Order for the closure of Footpath Remenham No 4, for a closure of an 80m section of the footpath for the set up and de rig of the Festival stage from Monday 9th to Wednesday 11th July 2018 inclusive and from Monday 16th July to Tuesday 17th July 2018 inclusive be approved;
- 2) within the closure a 620m section be included for evening performances from Wednesday 11th July to Sunday 15th July 2018 inclusive and day time performances on Saturday 14th July and Sunday 15th July, under Section 16A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, subject to the receipt of the requisite consent of the Secretary of State for Transport.

108. SDL COMMUNITY FACILITY, NORTH WOKINGHAM MATTHEWSGREEN

The Executive considered a report relating to a new community facility within the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL).

The Executive Member for Strategic Highways and Planning informed the meeting that the Kings Church Wokingham had come forward with a proposal to be the provider of the community centre and in addition had committed to putting nearly £1m of their own money into the project to undertake the work outlined in their proposal which included a café, community hall, nursery etc. The Kings Church Wokingham wanted people to be made aware that although they would be managing the new Centre, like the FBC Centre in Finchampstead, the building would not be made to look like or feel like a 'church'. Councillor Lee also highlighted that the facility would be fitted out to a good commercial standard to comply with all health and safety legislation.

Councillor Weeks highlighted the wording on the cover of the Proposals document which stated that the proposals were "subject to contract and to approval by the Planning Committee of WBC to the modifications ..." and reminded Members that, approval of the Community Centre by the Executive in no way commits the Council, in its role as Planning Authority, to approve such an application.

In recommending Kings Church Wokingham as the provider for the Matthewsgreen Community Centre Councillor Lee highlighted all the activities that they had provided in the past eg a mum and toddler group, Soulscape, youth club etc. He also praised the work of all the churches for the great service they provided throughout the community.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) it be agreed in principal that the provider for the Matthewsgreen Community Centre will be Kings Church Wokingham subject to the Director of Locality and Customer Services and Executive Member for Strategic Highways and Planning receiving a satisfactory form of agreement for suitable governance arrangements with WBC to enable provision of services which are consistent with 'Shaping Our New Communities' principles; and
- 2) that subject to 1) being satisfactorily concluded, a final agreement with Kings Church Wokingham will be written and reported back to the Executive for final agreement.

109. WOKINGHAM SCHOOL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS 2019/20

The Executive considered a report setting out proposed School Admissions Arrangements for Wokingham Borough in 2019/20.

The Executive Member for Children's Services introduced the report and advised that the proposals, which included the following three variations, had been consulted upon:

- Changes to the designated areas involving four schools: Aldryngton, Loddon, Whiteknights and Radstock;
- Tightening of the definition of "residency" which was designed to stop "gaming" i.e. where a short term rent is sought to gain a catchment area advantage;
- The parents' choice, which makes it clear that when a child (who has not yet reached the age of statutory education) starts school the parents can choose whether the child attends on a full or part time basis.

Councillor Jorgensen was pleased to see that the definition of residency was being tightened up and with regard to the changes in designated areas asked if these could be reviewed after one year in operation to ensure that the changes were working? Councillor Ashwell confirmed that all the schools involved were happy with the proposals but agreed that a review would be appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the 2019/20 admissions arrangements for Wokingham Borough Council community and controlled schools be agreed. To include the variations:

- 1) The changes to designated areas
- 2) A tightening of the definition of "residency"
- 3) The parents' choice of full or part time attendance of reception classes.

These comprising the co-ordinated admissions scheme and admission policy 2019-20, the local in year co-ordinated scheme 2019-20, the sixth form policy 2019-20 and the amended Designated Areas of Loddon and Whiteknights Primary Schools.