

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE EXECUTIVE  
HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2018 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.25 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

Councillors: Charlotte Haitham Taylor (Chairman), Richard Dolinski, Pauline Helliars-Symons, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Philip Mirfin, Stuart Munro, Anthony Pollock and Simon Weeks

**Other Councillors Present**

Prue Bray  
Rachel Burgess  
Lindsay Ferris  
David Hare  
Clive Jones  
Ian Pittock  
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey  
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

**61. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**62. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Executive Meetings held on 17 September and 20 September 2018 and the Executive Meeting held on 27 September 2018 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Leader of Council.

**63. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor Norman Jorgensen declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 64 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 Pauline Jorgensen and Stuart Munro declared personal interests in Agenda Item 64 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that they were paid Non-Executive Directors of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillors Jorgensen and Munro remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillors Philip Mirfin and Anthony Pollock declared personal interests in Agenda Item 64 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that they were paid Non-Executive Directors of Optalis Holdings Ltd. Councillors Mirfin and Pollock remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

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

**Question**

I first reported Street Light number 5 Robin Hood Lane opposite Winnersh railway station as being out on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017, as can be seen from the screenshot provided to the Council.

As this report is now coming up for its 1st anniversary I would like to know what action (if any) has been carried out since I reported this fault.

As a regular user of Winnersh railway station, I have not witnessed this street light functioning since I first reported it, and it is still out at the time of submitting this question.

**Answer**

The problem with this particular street light is with the cabling which is provided by Scottish and Southern Electricity Power Distribution and it has been reported to them on numerous occasions but unfortunately, as you are obviously aware, it has not yet been resolved and I will take it up again and get the Officers to talk to the relevant company to get them to fix it; but it is not quite in my gift to go down with a screwdriver and sort it out. I will do what I can and obviously with the winter nights coming in getting it resolved is obviously important.

**Supplementary Question**

It appears that this important street light opposite Winnersh station which caters for approximately 450,000 passengers per annum has been neglected by Wokingham Borough Council. I reported four street lights out 23, 24, 25 and 26 King Street Lane on 4 September this year and these were repaired by Scottish and Southern because they had a cable fault. How can Wokingham Borough Council improve its service to the residents and travelling public in the future and not have a repeat of a neglected lamp column no 5 in Robin Hood Lane?

**Supplementary Answer**

As I said earlier the issue fundamentally is with the company providing the power and the cabling and they have to resolve it but I will take it up and I will get you a written answer as to when I expect something to be dealt with.

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

**Question**

I asked a question in February about the Memorandum of Understanding which the Council and Network Rail signed in 2016 to develop a solution to the Tanhill Lane crossing. This crossing currently has two separate bridges including a steep and unsightly temporary bridge which is very inconvenient for residents.

Keith Baker told me that the Memorandum of Understanding states that '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 multi-story car park has been open for some time now, but the unsightly and inconvenient temporary bridge is still in place.

Could the Executive Member for Highways and Transport please provide an update on what action the Council is taking to progress this project, and when residents can expect to see a permanent ramped footbridge in place?

### **Answer**

As previously stated, you are correct in that the Council and Network Rail have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding. The purpose of this is to record the parties' intention to work in a spirit of mutual trust and co-operation, which isn't often forthcoming with the railway companies, associated with the aim of delivering a ramped footbridge over the railway at Tan House railway crossing.

In line with Network Rail's current policies the responsibility for the delivery of a new bridge over the London line is indicated to be acceptable to replace what was effectively, they call it at grade but what it basically means is you walk over the line which is probably more dangerous than the bridge that is there now, the pedestrian crossing as the existing bridge over the Guildford line is not yet due for replacement or upgrade. I suspect the need is for a bridge that spans both lines apart from just one. The Council is of the view that improved facilities of both the London and Guildford lines accommodating pedestrians and cyclists is more beneficial for users.

In respect of costs for the delivery of a new bridge, temporary or permanent, are also covered within the Memorandum of Understanding as follows:

- Network Rail will wholly fund the temporary stepped bridge; and
- both Network Rail and WBC will approach funding collaboratively in respect of a permanent ramped footbridge solution.

This is a Network Rail pedestrian bridge and unfortunately they have made no movement to progress from the current position. As there is no budget available from us at least, it will struggle to be prioritised from our end but I will try and get some information out of Network Rail and see if I can let you have it in due course but I will keep you informed.

### **Supplementary Question**

I think we are all agreed that money is going to be an issue and the need to co-ordinate with Network Rail is going to be an issue. When I raised this question back in February Keith Baker acknowledged that CIL money could possibly be used to finance the funding of a permanent bridge. I am concerned that we do not seem to have any real action taken since 2016 when the Memorandum of Understanding was signed to find solutions and progress the building of a permanent ramped foot bridge and this is leaving local residents with an eyesore temporary bridge which many people cannot use.

Will the Council commit to approaching Network Rail within the next six months to establish a publicly available plan of action and timescales for the building of a permanent bridge which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act for accessibility?

### **Supplementary Answer**

I am happy to approach Network Rail and I will do it almost immediately. However as they have to be party to any decisions I doubt whether I can give you the timescales etc that you request but I will try.

### **64.3 Keith Malvern asked the Leader of the Council the following question:**

#### **Question**

I would like to ask a question on Item 65, the Revenue Monitoring Report. I am surprised to see under Corporate Services a cost pressure from increased business rates at Shute End and other corporate properties. What steps has the Council taken or intends to take to reduce this cost pressure?

#### **Answer**

I am sure that you will have been aware that nationally business rates were re-assessed in 2017 and this resulted in many properties being revalued and this included the Council's operational estate and as we have quite a large building here it mainly included Shute End. As such the Council was required to pay more business rates on its corporate properties. In 2017/18, Business Services was able to absorb this cost into its budget but following a review of budgets during Phase 1 of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Council the service no longer holds the capacity in the budgets to pay for the increased business rates. Therefore this is creating a pressure in the 2018/19 financial year and in future years' budgets it will be increased to cover the statutory pressure; so that is the pressure that you are seeing through at the moment.

#### **Supplementary Question**

You have referred, I think, to the large building that we are sitting in now and recognising that the potential shape of local government may well change in the coming years I was hoping that you would have perhaps considered looking again at the option of moving out from this site and allowing this site to be used for another priority of this Council which is truly affordable housing. Will you consider that?

#### **Supplementary Answer**

We continue to look at all of our assets right across the Council. The Council holds many assets, including things like car parks etc and we have to provide value for money across everything we do for our whole entire community. We will work with all of our partners through things like "One Public Estate"; that means working the police, health partners, the voluntary sector, the town and parish councils to see how we can work to make sure we are all using our assets appropriately so that we all get best value for money. If that means looking at this building then that is what we will also be doing.

### **65. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

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

#### **65.1 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Business, Economic Development and Strategic Planning the following question:**

#### **Question**

When is the Borough Design guide scheduled to be updated, to reflect changes in the Borough including increasing car ownership and renewable energy requirements for new builds?

#### **Answer**

The Borough Design Guide, you are quite right, was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the Core Strategy in 2012.

Through the establishment of design principles, the Guide assists our decisions, enhances the quality of development and ensures that proposals are of the highest quality of design, as I think you probably know.

That means inclusive, safe, harmonious, welcoming and all the good stuff that is in the guide.

As a supplementary document the design principles and sustainability ambitions within it need to be underpinned by our Local Plan policies and an evidence base is required to support these policies.

Since these are currently being reviewed, as you will see later in the agenda, as part of our Local Plan Update, the logical time to review the Guide would be alongside this process. This will mean that any amendments reflect our updated planning strategy and management policies when these are established. The appropriateness of the parking standards could similarly be reviewed on this basis.

### **Supplementary Question**

As Simon can probably remember and as every Executive Member for Highways can remember that I am always trying to get at least two spaces per dwelling because the realistic idea is that Wokingham has the highest first car ownership, the second highest second car ownership and the fifth highest third car ownership in the country. What are we going to do before we have 'carmageddon' in these new developments which is actually going on right now? If you go to any new development you will see cars parked all over the place because of inadequate parking. The standards are not adequate for purpose. So when is it going to change?

### **Supplementary Answer**

I totally agree with you.

## **65.2 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:**

### **Question**

This week, at our Planning Meeting, I saw housing applications being approved for developments that only provides for just over one car parking space per home. These are often in locations where there is scant provision for public transport and very few services nearby. I have seen housing plans for even less than one space per home in Wokingham, with the excuse of 'it's near the train station'.

Experience shows that we end up with too many cars for the spaces provided. There are several housing developments where residents are desperate for better parking solutions than what has been provided. Most homes have at least two working adults who need to use cars and in other situations there is not enough space for anyone visiting and often these visitor spots are permanently used by residents to alleviate the parking problems. We end up with cars parking on pavements, grassland and neighbouring streets. Essentially, under-providing car parking in Wokingham, is really, really not working.

I'd like to know what Wokingham Borough Council now and in future plans to stop the chaos of parking problems continuing?

### **Answer**

WBC has an adopted parking strategy as you are aware and this was consulted on and approved by Members as formal Council policy. All recommendations to the Planning Committee are based on a full assessment of all the material considerations, including the relevant current parking standards and the Planning Committee need to take those into account when determining planning applications. Schemes presented at the Committee would normally be determined in accordance with the Council's current prevailing parking standards unless there is a very clear reason to vary those. That would need to be set out in the Committee report and entirely proven and justified. We are currently in the process of updating our local plan and through this process we will carefully consider the appropriateness of the current standards as we go forward and whether they need to be reviewed.

### **Supplementary question**

While I see that is very well intended and things and I understand what it is but in practice I feel that it is not happening. I particularly don't see it happening with the properties that we have control of, things like WHL build, particularly around Carnival Pool and the Peach Place Development and things like this. The parking we have put in those places going forward is inadequate and if we do not make sure that we stick to the standards ourselves how on earth do we expect third party developers to do the same?

### **Supplementary answer**

In response to that I would say that where we have varied the standards there is a justification for that. For instance, as you have mentioned, properties built very close to the station will generally not be required to have the same formal parking standards as properties that are not easily within public transport links. But as you probably know Councillor Ferris is your representative on the Local Plan Update Group and as he knows me well I will be happy to work collaboratively with him and with Councillor Munro to ensure that parking standards are something that is looked at as we go to the Local Plan Update.

### **65.3 Carl Doran had asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question. Due to his inability to attend the meeting a written reply was provided:**

#### **Question**

The Government is currently consulting on changing the planning rules around exploratory drilling for shale gas, with a view to making it a "permitted development" right. Has Wokingham Borough Council made a submission to this consultation?

#### **Answer**

As a unitary authority Wokingham Borough is also a Minerals and Waste Planning Authority. This means the Council would be responsible for determining any oil and gas proposals within its administrative area.

The current Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) consultation relates to proposed changes to permitted development rights for non-hydraulic shale gas. The consultation seeks views on the principle of granting planning permission for non-hydraulic shale gas exploration development through a permitted development right. It is important to note that the proposed changes only relate to shale gas, and proposals which do not include hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking.

Nationally, unconventional oil and gas sources, such as shale, are emerging as a potential form of energy supply. However information on existing sites as well as places with the greatest potential for oil and gas does not indicate extraction is likely in Wokingham Borough. This is because there is no history of extraction in the Borough and geologically it doesn't overlay any known viable shale reserves. Although the Government has offered licences for oil and gas exploration in the Borough, none have been taken up. As a result there is no demand for oil and gas exploration in the Borough and Officers are not aware of any plans for oil or gas either through conventional or unconventional methods of extraction.

Accordingly a response has not been submitted to this consultation as there is no evidence of demand for oil and gas exploration anywhere in the Borough. The Council will of course continue to monitor future government proposals and consultations regarding any proposed changes to planning for oil and gas.

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

**Question**

Shouldn't all new roads include both a cycleway and a footway alongside at the time the route is built rather than trying to retrofit these at a later date?

**Answer**

I think that putting cycleways on some of our current roads, which weren't built recently, is a sensible thing to do. I understand the sense of your question going forward and looking at new roads however it will need to be considered at the planning stage as there is no point trying to do it after the stage when you are planning the new roads and obviously we have to ensure that we have the relevant CIL monies or developer contributions available. Also, I think this has been linked in, that the decision has to be linked to the planning policies that we have available. So I think it is maybe another thing for the local plan update to consider. That I think is how I see us going forward.

**Supplementary Question**

The new Shinfield Relief Road, from what many call the Blackboys' Roundabout, is accompanied by both a footway and a cycleway down to the small roundabout at the Science Park. Why are the footway and cycleway not continued down to the junction with the Arborfield Road at the Magpie and Parrot despite the fact that there is bags of room both sides of the road especially given the expected several thousand housing site just along the road at Hall Farm?

**Supplementary Answer**

Firstly Hall Farm was not on anyone's radar when the Eastern Relief Road was designed. Secondly, the reason for the cycle and footway down to the first mini-roundabout is because of the Science Park which was part and parcel of the application of the first phase of that relief road and it had to go in the bridge over the motorway at the relief road down to that first roundabout. That was actually necessary to give access to the Science Park. Given that the Science Park is a University of Reading facility, and obviously people are going to and from the main University campus, and therefore perhaps a lot of people would like to use their bicycles or walk that distance perhaps. So that is why it was incorporated into that.

As far as the rest of the Eastern Relief Road is concerned when it was conceived it was very much a relief road and not an ordinary estate road and as I said earlier the fact that Hall Farm at that stage, three or four years ago, was not on anyone's radar as coming through as a major development. I am afraid if Hall Farm happens and we consider it necessary to put in a footway and a cycleway then I am afraid we are going to have to retrofit it.

**65.5 Clive Jones asked the Executive Member for Environment the following question:**

**Question**

re3 have been charging for DIY household waste since September 2016. This is against the advice of two Conservative cabinet ministers and some junior ministers.

Can you advise me when re3 will be taking the advice of your very senior colleagues and ceasing making these charges which as you know may well be unlawful.

**Answer**

Firstly just to state that re3 does not charge for household waste so your question is incorrect. re3, as you are aware, is the waste management partnership between Bracknell, Reading and Wokingham Councils and manages the recycling centres in Bracknell and in Reading. Like all local authorities re3 has a statutory duty to provide waste management services for household waste, but in common with other councils, the re3 partner councils have introduced charges for the disposal of 'non-household' wastes such as soil, rubble, and so on.

If on the other hand you are proposing to stop charging for this waste then please tell me how much you would increase the council tax by to compensate the loss of this income?

**Supplementary Question**

There are several councils that disagree with re3 policy and do not charge for what is described as DIY household waste; and that is a description that comes from your own Government. So I am very disappointed that you are not changing your policy. Let us see what the current Secretary of State says because I have not had a reply from him yet. If he says that you should not be charging for DIY waste will you urge re3 to change their policy?

**Supplementary Answer**

If the Government changes legislation so that we cannot charge then clearly we will follow that legislation.

Just to be clear re3 charges for the following sorts of things just to read from their policy. Things like: bricks, breezeblocks, concrete, cement, drainage pipes, gravel, hardcore, paving slabs, rubble, sand, sanitary ware, slates, stone, tarmac and tiles. So it is all those sorts of things that re3 charges for.

In the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 it states that waste from construction or demolition works, including preparatory work, is defined as industrial waste.

While in opposition Liberals will say just about anything to gain a few votes but once in power they change their tune. You asked about other councils Cornwall Council, which is controlled by a Liberal and independent alliance also charges for waste. As does the

Liberal controlled Portsmouth City Council. Taking plasterboard as an example Cornwall charges £4 a bag, Portsmouth £6 a bag and re3 £3 a bag.

In Portsmouth a decision was made on 22 September 2016 to commence charging. The Liberals complained about this and said it should be reversed. The Liberals then took control of Portsmouth City Council earlier this year. Surprise, surprise on 13 July 2018 the Liberal Democrat Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety considered a paper on the future of charging for the waste and took the decision to continue with the charges. So just look at your own colleagues before you start whingeing about other people.

**65.6 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:**

**Question**

The Revenue Monitoring Report (Agenda Item 65) shows a predicted overspend for this year for Children's Services that is £790k higher than the overspend that was predicted in July, all of it in Social Work and Early Intervention Services, which in July was predicted to have no overspend. The notes suggest that this is due to increased staffing costs. What has happened to cause these sudden and clearly unanticipated additional costs?

**Answer**

I must emphasise that this is not the fault of any of our Officers or anyone in particular. The predictions in July assumed that any increase in staffing costs would be met by savings elsewhere in the Children's Social Care budget. This has proved not to be the case because increases in activity and number of children requiring assessment, looked after children, and those subject to child protection plans has grown considerably. In addition the recruitment of staff to meet these demands and have manageable caseloads has had to rely on the use of agency workers who are considerably more expensive than permanent employees.

In the medium term we are planning to deliver more effective alternatives to care strategies and develop a further recruitment and retention initiative that will make Wokingham an even more attractive place for social workers and others to work in and we have set up a working party to look at this. There will be an interim report on its work at the November Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

**Supplementary Question**

Somewhat similarly to the question Keith Malvern asked this sounds like a little bit of slightly overoptimistic budgeting in the first place. I think perhaps realistically how much of the total overspend, which is £996k, do you think you will be able to claw back by the end of the financial year?

**Supplementary Answer**

I cannot be absolutely certain about that but I can assure you that we are exploring a number of measures both short term and longer term. The longer term strategies obviously will not deliver any successful results this year but over the next 2-3 years they will do. One example of that is building more homes within the Borough for future special needs children. Not those who are currently outside because they are in stable places and cannot really be moved. There will be more information on our various strategies in due course. This is something that we are concerned about and are genuinely working on.

**65.7 Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Finance the following question:**

**Question**

At the 20th September Full Council Meeting I asked the following supplementary question under Agenda Item 50.4

My question related to a number of contracts including the joint WBC/WTC contract covering the recent Market Place Refurbishment.

“Can you confirm how much of the contingency above the £3.8m originally allocated has already been used by each Council?”

As of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October, I have yet to receive the courtesy of a reply.

However on Page 55 under Agenda item 66 Capital Monitoring. I was perplexed and somewhat annoyed to find the answer to my question has been included within the Recommendation Section - which states - £200k increased contingency match-funding contribution from Wokingham Town Council for the Wokingham Town Centre improvements is now included in the capital budget. This then clearly indicates that both WTC and WBC are to pay an extra £200k each to cover the additional requirement over and above the original £3.8M taking the cost of the Market Place refurbishment to £4.2m.

Are there likely to be any additional costs over and above this £4.2m figure and if so when and how are we to be advised of this figure?

**Answer**

The original construction budget for the scheme was £3.8m with a contingency amount to be agreed of £400,000. The construction costs are split between Wokingham Borough Council and Wokingham Town Council on an equal basis. The additional £200,000 in the capital budget is Wokingham Town Council's share of the contingency that has now been drawn down to match the Wokingham Borough Council contingency.

To date there has been a £4.1m spent already.

There is an amount of £360,000 in dispute and it is hoped that the final settlement amount will be contained within the budget, including the contingency, but this is very much depending on the final resolution and there may be some cost pressures on the budget going forward.

So at this time I do not have the final figure but I expect to have that early December.

**Supplementary Question**

Would any additional costs over and above the £4.2m be provided on a matched funding basis?

**Supplementary Answer**

I cannot give you that answer at this time because we are still in negotiations with Balfour Beatty and WSP and as I said we are in discussions about £360,000 so I will know that early December time and then be able to give you an answer about that.

## **65.8 David Hare asked the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing the following question:**

### **Question**

The Government has announced extra funding of £240m for Adult Social Care budgets to be used over the winter. WBC's share of this is £401,589. Will this extra money be used to ease the pressure on the health system by paying for home care packages to help patients get out of hospital quicker, reablement packages to help patients carry out everyday tasks and regain mobility and confidence, and home adaptations? Or, will it be used to reduce the projected deficit for adult social services from about £800,000 (page 40 of the Executive agenda) to £400,000?

### **Answer**

We welcome the additional allocation of funding from Central Government for Adult Social Care. We will review how this can support our front line staff, equipment and commissioning of packages of care.

In addition, we will continue to monitor the current strong performance of our Better Care Fund Service which supports the responsive discharges including the envisaged demands over the coming winter period.

### **Supplementary Question**

The extra funding is probably too late to recruit many short term staff to help with the winter pressures because it has only just come. John Redwood, from what he wrote about this, implied that you will be improving the services that the Council are giving but would not most of this money mainly be going to be used to reduce the deficit rather than provide extra services?

### **Supplementary Answer**

Yes you are right the letter was dated 17 October and we were waiting to see what strings were attached to it. Basically the letter from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has told us that the money has got to be spent on DToC (Delayed Transfer of Care) and we are actually working up a scheme to be able to deliver on that but as you know DToC requires us working with our health partners and the voluntary sector therefore it would be prudent for us to actually spend that £401,000 wisely. So we are actually working up a plan and it is actually a plan that I welcome the Liberals actually being involved in as well.

## **66. SHAREHOLDERS' REPORT**

*(Councillors Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Philip Mirfin, Stuart Munro and Anthony Pollock declared personal interests in this item)*

The Executive considered a report setting out the budget monitoring position and providing an operational update on the work of the Council Owned Companies for the period to 31 August 2018.

When introducing the report Councillor Munro reminded the meeting that the report covered both the housing companies and the adult care services company Optalis.

In relation to the work of WHL Councillor Pauline Jorgensen updated the meeting on matters which had arisen since the report was written which included the fact that work

had now started on the Tape Lane site and that in January 2019 Broadway House would be providing an extra 10 units of temporary accommodation.

With regard to Optalis Councillor Pollock informed Members that the company continued to receive “good” ratings when their services were inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC); which was an improvement on previous inspection ratings. In addition staff turnover continued to be low, particularly compared to the national average, and had reduced by over half since the new Chief Executive had taken over. The Chief Executive had also been responsible for promoting the company to other councils and improving its public perception which had been achieved in part by the publication of a number of articles in the national press.

The Leader of Council commended Optalis on their good CQC results and informed Members that she had been very impressed, during a recent visit to one of their care homes, with the care and activities they were providing and the pride that the staff had in working for Optalis; which had led to lower rates of sickness and higher rates of retention.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 31 August 2018 be noted;
- 2) the operational update for the period to 31 August 2018 be noted.

#### **67. REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2018/19 – END OF SEPTEMBER 2018**

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

In relation to the Adult Services’ budget the Executive Member for Adult Social Care advised that although the adverse variance was showing as £800k significant progress was being made to reduce that further. Exactly how much the variance would be reduced was as yet unknown as it was difficult to predict what future pressures/demands might come forward. Officers were however working very hard to reduce the figure without making any cuts in services. Councillor Dolinski confirmed that one area that was being looked at was the provision of services that would enable people to remain in their own home rather than going into a care home.

The Executive Member for Children’s Services reported that the service was facing a massive challenge relating to increased demand as there were more children requiring support. Councillor Helliard-Symons highlighted some of the pressures facing the service which included: an increase of a third since this time last year in the number of looked after children in the Borough which resulted in the need for more foster carers; there were more children whose needs were being catered for outside of the Borough which resulted in more home to school transport costs; more children with complex needs who were living longer; Government legislation meant that young people in the Council’s care now had to be looked after until they were 25; and in addition there were increased costs of residential care.

With regard to the ongoing pressure in the High Needs Block Councillor Helliard-Symons informed Members that the number of pupils with special educational needs had risen by almost 15% in the last 2-3 years. The proportion of those with social, emotional and mental health or autistic spectrum disorder was increasing in the Borough beyond the

numbers seen nationally and indeed across the whole of the South East. In addition there were insufficient suitable placements within the Borough which resulted in an increased reliance on expensive, independent, out of Borough provision.

In order to address some of these pressures the Council was looking to build more placements within the Borough but this would not benefit those whose needs were currently catered for outside the Borough as they were settled and could not be moved. It would therefore be 2-3 years before any return on investment would be seen.

The Leader of Council stated that matters had moved on quite substantially since the report was published and the current position was actually more favourable than was set out in the report.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the quarter two position of the revenue budget and the level of balances in respect of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Schools' Block and the Authority's investment portfolio be noted;
- 2) it be noted that there are no Carry Forward estimates to the General Fund identified at this stage;
- 3) the updates on the Adult Social Care Action Plan and the Children's Services' Action Plan (previously High Needs Block Action Plan) be noted.

**68. CAPITAL MONITORING 2018/19 - END OF SEPTEMBER 2018**

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

The Leader of Council advised the meeting that there was a small variance in the Capital Budget however when taking into account the fact that this financial year the Capital Budget was £134m the variance as a proportion was not very large.

The Executive Member for Highways and Transport drew Members' attention to the estimated under and overspends, as set out in the report, which showed that when taking the entire Capital Programme into account, which amounted to £222m, no overspend was actually anticipated and variances in the current year spend were likely to relate to re-profiling of schemes whose spend was planned for next financial year.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the quarter two position for the capital budget, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- 2) the overall value of the 2018/19 capital programme budget include the final part of the previously agreed ring-fenced capital contribution, for £200k increased contingency match-funding contribution from Wokingham Town Council for the Wokingham Town Centre Improvements capital budget;
- 3) the overall value of the 2018/19 capital programme budget include £164k S106 contributions for sports facilities to increase the capital budget for the Bulmershe Sports Centre.

## **69. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE (LPU) TOWARDS OUR STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

The Executive considered a report relating to the Local Plan Update (LPU) which was intended to provide a robust strategy for managing development to ensure that it occurred in suitable and sustainable locations and that it was deliverable and well-designed and would help to regenerate towns and villages within the Borough, whilst supporting social and economic prosperity and encouraging economic growth.

When introducing the report the Executive Member for Business, Economic Development and Strategic Planning stated that the purpose of the report was to seek approval to undertake consultation to assist the development of the Local Plan Update. The consultation would last from November 2018-February 2019 and every household in the Borough would be provided with a pack explaining the process that was being followed and this would be supplemented by public meetings which would be held at around 10 different venues within the Borough.

As part of the process Councillor Munro advised that the Council would be considering over 300 sites and this figure was expected to grow during the consultation period. The purpose of the consultation was to gain residents' views on the sites that had been put forward and how development should be managed in different places across the Borough.

Following a query by Councillor Pollock it was confirmed that a number of council owned sites had been included on the list. In addition, given that residents were unhappy with the amount of development and associated traffic congestion, Members queried why the Council was carrying out this process now, particularly as there was already in existence a Local Plan which ran until 2026. Councillor Munro explained that the Council was required to constantly review its Local Plan to ensure that it was still valid and in addition if the process wasn't followed then there was the danger that unsuitable planning applications could be won on appeal. In addition this was an opportunity to get residents' views on development within the Borough.

Councillor Weeks informed the meeting that he, and others, had recently met with the Chief Planner from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and whilst the Chief Planner was very positive that the Council had a structured Local Plan, which was enabling the delivery of houses in the right places, he had made it clear that it was absolutely essential to have an up to date, and frequently updated, Local Plan in order to continue to be able to direct where the housing numbers needed to go that were being imposed on the Council by central Government.

The Leader of Council urged everyone to take part in the consultation, and particularly attend the public events, as it would be an opportunity for residents to have their say about where they would like new homes of the future and new facilities to be built.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the 'Local Plan Update: Towards our Strategy' be approved for consultation, including supporting engagement activities;
- 2) the Director of Corporate Services and Director Locality and Customer Services be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Business, Economic Development and Strategic Planning, to agree minor amendments, if necessary, prior to consultation;

3) the Local Development Scheme 2018 be adopted.

This page is intentionally left blank