

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF  
THE EXECUTIVE  
HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2019 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.17 PM**

**Committee Members Present**

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

**Other Councillors Present**

Stephen Conway  
Gary Cowan  
Andy Croy  
Lindsay Ferris  
Graham Howe  
Clive Jones  
Malcolm Richards  
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

**33. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**34. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 25 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader of Council.

**35. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillor UllaKarin Clark declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 38, Shareholders' Report, by virtue of the fact that she was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of Loddon Homes Ltd. Councillor Clark remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillors John Halsall, Stuart Munro and Wayne Smith declared personal interests in Agenda Item 38, Shareholders' Report, by virtue of the fact that they were unpaid Non-Executive Directors of WBC (Holdings) Ltd. Councillors Halsall, Munro and Smith remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor John Kaiser declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 38, Shareholders' Report, by virtue of the fact that he was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of Optalis (Holdings) Ltd, WBC (Holdings) Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd. Councillor Kaiser remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor Charles Margetts declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 38, Shareholders' Report, by virtue of the fact that he was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of Optalis (Holdings) Ltd. Councillor Margetts remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

**36. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

### **36.1 Philip Meadowcroft asked the Leader of the Council the following question:**

#### **Question**

The Lingard Report, (which WBC has decided not to place on its website, but is available to anyone who contacts WBC), was ordered by the previous Leader of the Council following the Court of Appeal Criminal Division's decision to uphold the decision of Reading Crown Court to halt the HHS breach of enforcement trial. In the opinion of the Reading Crown Court Judge, particular WBC Councillors and officials had committed abuse of power in the course of bringing the case to Reading Crown Court rendering the case against HHS "unfair and unjust". The trial accordingly collapsed.

In her summing up at the Court of Appeal Criminal Division hearing into WBC's appeal against the decision of Reading Crown Court, Lady Justice Hallett declared:

"[The Reading Crown Court] Judge's finding that WBC had induced Mr Scott to act to his detriment and then taken advantage of the situation, in our view, must stand."

This finding of fact had been established at Reading and confirmed by the Court of Appeal. Only a successful appeal by WBC to the Supreme Court could overturn the Reading Crown Court and the Court of Appeal. Such an appeal has not been made by WBC.

The terms of reference for the Lingard investigation were to assess whether, in the light of the two courts' decisions, particular Councillors, including the current Leader and Deputy Leader, and particular Officials were guilty of maladministration. Additionally, Mr Lingard was invited by WBC to review various issues including the judgements of Reading Crown Court and the Court of Appeal.

The Lingard Report has openly, disrespectfully, and unlawfully challenged and rejected the opinions of both the Crown Court and the Court of Appeal. Lingard has declared that the courts were wrong to find that WBC unjustly and unfairly induced Mr Scott to withdraw a crucial appeal. Lingard has said that the courts had based their conclusions on "supposition and a lack of clear evidence". It is simply not permissible for Lingard to challenge and discredit the courts' rulings. As a result, the Lingard report has discredited itself and lacks any merit.

Lingard has turned out to be a re-run of the evidence presented at Reading Crown Court and the disrespect and contempt shown by Lingard towards the courts is, in my view, absolutely unacceptable and the Report and, indeed, Mr Lingard, may now be subject to legal intervention and possible withdrawal. The Lingard Report has thus been a waste of WBC residents' council tax.

On top of this, Mr Lingard has disclosed that he was briefed by WBC last year to investigate concerns by Reading Crown Court about a shortage of evidence supplied by WBC in the early stages of WBC's prosecution of HHS. I have been advised – and surprised - that last year's report by Mr Lingard is not available because it never existed. In short, Mr Lingard's independence - fundamental to the integrity and credibility of his investigation - has been materially compromised.

The present report contains over 300 redactions ostensibly to protect the identification of the individuals involved. The redactions are absurd and pointless because the Officials are identifiable by their job titles and their personal identities are shown on the WBC

website. The Councillors are equally easily identifiable. But, far more significantly, 11 complete paragraphs of evidence mainly from two Councillors, Mr Halsall and Mr Kaiser, have been deleted from the original Report delivered to WBC in July. Either they, or WBC, or both are determined that the whole truth should not be made known.

Whilst these 11 redactions remain in place, the Lingard Report is worthless because everybody else - be they members of this Council, the officials and staff who run WBC, and the residents of the Borough – are prevented from knowing what Mr Halsall and Mr Kaiser clearly regard as something which must be kept secret.

Having put the issue into its appropriate context, here is my question:

Bearing in mind:

- Mr Lingard's disclosure of his investigation last year leads inevitably to conclude his independence has been compromised, and,
- The 300-plus redactions and 11 redacted paragraphs, will the Leader of the Council accept the only possible conclusion that the Lingard Report should be scrapped and be replaced by a properly independent and law-respecting investigation into maladministration and misconduct in WBC's handling of its prosecution of HHS?

### **Answer**

Thank you very, very, much for that very, very, long question.

My short response is that I do not accept that the Lingard Report should be scrapped.

You make some serious allegations about Mr Lingard's independence and state that his report is unlawful, both of which the Council would strongly refute.

As one of the residents who expressed concerns about the Court of Appeal judgement the Council has worked closely with you, and at length, from the start of the year which has included you meeting with the Chief Executive and also speaking to Mr Lingard during his review. The Council has endeavoured to be open with you and listened to your concerns and at no time prior to you reading Mr Lingard's report did you raise concerns about his independence.

You question Mr Lingard's independence because of his involvement in the review of the email searches conducted towards the end of 2017, a fact which he discloses himself in the report in Section 14(3).

The two tasks that he undertook for the Council were entirely separate from each other and stood alone, and in reaching his conclusions on the Hare Hatch matter he placed no reliance on his conclusions in relation to the earlier matter. The Monitoring Officer has spoken with Mr Lingard who confirms this.

With regard to redactions in the report, the Council has a duty of care to protect the personal information of its staff. This is standard practice but I acknowledge that this makes it slightly more difficult to read the report. However, to call it "worthless" is an exaggeration. Please acknowledge that the Executive Summary of the report is not subject to any redaction and transparently sets out a balance of conclusions including the learning of lessons in terms of procedure and, in particular, the proper documentation of negotiations and the management of complex cases. These lessons are valuable to the Council and will help us to improve our management of similar cases in the future.

### **Supplementary Question**

Mr Lingard wrote in paragraph 14.8 on page 36 "It became clear to me during the course of my enquiries that none of the Councillors professed or indeed had any knowledge of planning law and procedure".

You say you were doing your best in the press releases being issued to resolve the planning and enforcement issues of your constituent but the courts were overwhelmingly convinced that you and your colleagues were part of an unfair and unjust set of actions, conduct and behaviour and Mr Lingard found that you had no knowledge of planning law and procedure. Then you have insisted that key elements of your investigation interviews should be kept secret. Your defence of your conduct, such that it is, is in tatters.

Accordingly it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that you are unfit to uphold the integrity of the position you hold as Council Leader and Councillor Kaiser as your deputy. Under such circumstances will you and Councillor Kaiser tell me and the Members present tonight, and the residents of the Borough, why you should be seriously considering standing down as Leader and Deputy Leader?

### **Supplementary Answer**

As this is in effect an affair of the Monitoring Officer he will give you a reply in writing.

### **37. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

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

#### **37.1 Chris Smith had asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question but as he was unable to attend the meeting the answer below will be sent to him:**

#### **Question**

Can the Executive Member provide an update on the annual audit?

#### **Answer**

The Council published its draft accounts on 31 May 2019 in accordance with statutory deadlines. There then followed a period of audit by Ernst & Young (EY), the Council's appointed auditors. This was due to complete by 31 July 2019, when the audited accounts would be published. Unfortunately, due to circumstances outside of both the Council's and EY's control, concerning the audit of the Royal Berkshire Pension Fund, EY were not able to 'sign-off' the accounts by 31 July 2019. All other aspects of the audit have been completed satisfactorily.

There are no consequences or implications on the Council for this delay, which is outside of our control and will clearly impact on all Berkshire Unitary Authorities.

The accounts for 2018/19 as at 31 July 2019 have been published on the Council's website, with an explanation as to why they are still unsigned.

### **37.2 Gary Cowan asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:**

#### **Question**

At the Planning Committee on the 14th of August, various decisions were taken which had links to car parking and electric vehicle charging. For example at Matthew's Green for 16 residential units the provision was only 11 of which two were disabled and I expect two more to be electric vehicle charging and if so that will only leave 7 parking bays for 16 residential units.

As an aside to this menial provision at Matthews Green two planning applications by Wokingham Council itself on school sites no provision has been made for electric vehicle charging. Is this one rule for residents and a different one for the Council's own Planning Applications which conflicts with the Council's so called climate emergency planning?

#### **Answer**

All planning applications, as you know, recommended for approval, whether they are private or Council developments, are considered against the Council's adopted and emerging guidance; including its parking standards. All Council schemes require approval by the Council's Planning Committee which would ensure consistency on these matters.

The Council's emerging guidance on Electric Vehicle (EV) states:

E6 - For non-residential land uses including employment, leisure, education and retail, EV charging points will also be required. Land uses with shorter stays such as leisure and retail should consider rapid chargers. Where they are active, the EV parking bays will need to be marked out and signed. The following minimum levels of provision will be required if there is car parking:

- passive and active one charging point for every 20 spaces;
- 5% of the car parking spaces to be passive and 5% active for purposes of more than 20 spaces.

In addition to this, further EV charging information and guidance is becoming available from Central Government and the Department for Transport. As the Council is progressing, as you know, the Local Plan we will be looking at and will be updating and have the opportunity to review the current parking and EV charging requirements.

The parking provision for the Matthews Green scheme, being referenced, was discussed on the night of the Committee and clarification was given around the provision of disabled parking, which is located within the retail area and not in the residential element. In respect to EV charging the following condition was applied to accommodate this:

“Prior to the first occupation of the residential units, details of electric vehicle charging within the local centre car park shall be submitted to the Council for written approval. The details as approved shall be installed prior to first occupation, and shall be maintained thereafter, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Council.”

#### **Supplementary Question**

Looking at the request for climate advice in the press today and IMD 26, which I am very pleased to say was postponed to 2 October instead of earlier on this evening, I am hoping that my supplementary will be considered helpful.

Where I have difficulty is getting my head around is the EU legislation which goes back to July 2018 and as we are in a climate emergency the building blocks that are available for us to use are the Building Regulations and planning changes now and not tomorrow to affect changes other planning authorities have already done. This report, the Executive decision which is delayed to next week, it goes on to say that the saving installing a retrofit situation for a charging point the saving is £1,000 against a retrofit which is over £2,000. If all goes to plan from now until 2026 we are scheduled to build another 5,600 houses. If we use the guidelines set out in the IMD 26 report only 300 houses will have unplugged charging points and the other 5,300 will not.

From 2026-2030 when we will be carbon neutral we will build another 4,000 odd houses and only 800 of those will have unplugged charging points.

My question is if we follow the schedule how does this delayed introduction fit in with climate neutral 2030 when the occupants of about 9,500 houses will not have unplugged charging and will cost them about £2k a plot to get it? Will that encourage them to buy an electric car? Is this not an opportunity, this report here which is Executive IMD26 that is being dealt with next week, to rewrite IMD26 to further the Council's aims and ambitions in its climate change emergency planning?

### **Supplementary Answer**

I think you are absolutely right Gary and I think the emerging Local Plan, as we have got another major issue on that which is parking standards, we do need to consider that and I agree with you the sooner we get the detail out I think anything we can do that will help get to carbon neutral because that is not going to be an easy task being carbon neutral by 2030. Having spent the last 20 years in energy efficiency I know how difficult it is. But I do agree. I think it is something that we are going to have to seriously look at and get provision in all of our new houses to have that.

### **37.3 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:**

#### **Question**

Why is Wokingham Housing Ltd using a private company for building regulations rather than WBC Building Regulations?

#### **Answer**

As a commercial company WHL need to ensure value for money and performance delivery across all areas of work.

Initially WHL employed WBC Building Control Shared Services on all projects. However in 2018, we have agreed recently with WBC Building Control to change their approach and to seek a quote on a project by project basis with WBC Building Control invited to quote on each occasion. All quotes received are then assessed against an agreed criteria and in line with current procurement policies and procedures, to ensure the best possible value for money is secured.

That said we are constantly looking at services offered by the Council with a view to utilising those services and provided they do not disadvantage either the operating company or the Council, operationally or financially, we will use these services as delivered by the Council. This will allow us to exploit the synergies which exist between our wholly owned companies and the Council.

### **Supplementary Question**

Well I have spoken to the Head of Building Regulations for WBC. It would be very nice to fund and adequately staff this group so therefore we could have something. What are you doing to improve the WBC Building Regulations department to make it more efficient and more cost effective for Council owned companies so they do not spend their money elsewhere other than on our own Council services?

### **Supplementary Answer**

We are doing a review of our house building activity at the moment and I will be announcing a strategy in the not too distant future and that will include using parts of their Council to provide services such as administration and invoicing. One of the areas that we will be looking at is Building Control and what we need to do to be able to use that service.

As I say we are going to be looking at it and deciding what we need in the way of resources to enable us to use this service.

### **37.4 Lindsay Ferris asked the Leader of the Council the following question:**

#### **Question**

A Council should be prepared to provide its residents with information on all areas of its activity including those that show the Council in a poor light as well as those that show good practice.

It has come to my attention that WBC are now selectively deciding which documentation (relating to WBC actions and areas of responsibility) it puts on to its website. Can the Council advise how this has been allowed to happen?

#### **Answer**

Thank you for your question although it is not entirely clear whether you are making a general point or referring to something in particular?

Correct me if I'm wrong but you may be referring to the recent independent review of the Council's planning enforcement actions against Hare Hatch Sheeplands over a period which we both undertook together. The Council published a press release on 27 August which set out the findings of the review and quoted Mr Lingard's report where he concluded: "That the Council did not, either through its elected Members or its Officers, induce Mr Scott (either by intentional design or default) to act to his detriment by withdrawing his appeal against an enforcement notice." The press release also acknowledged some training needs which are being actioned.

Therefore, I would refute your assertion that the Council has been selective or unbalanced in what it published. It is not normal practice to publish reports such as this on our website.

However, can I also add that those residents who either expressed concerns about this matter or requested Mr Lingard's report have been provided a copy of this report.

### **Supplementary Question**

At the time of submitting my question neither of the appeal court judgements, the June 2018 or January 2019, cases relating to Hare Hatch Sheeplands were on our websites. The Lingard report, which you have just declared is available for residents but they have to know it is available to ask for it. Thirdly another document which I cannot find on the

website is an Employment Tribunal where a previous member of staff has successfully had a case for when she was working here. I cannot find them on our website.

All four documents show the Council to have not performed properly. I would like to know how the Council is going to improve if it is not prepared to publish documentation which actually puts it into a poor light? Could I have answers to that please?

### **Supplementary Answer**

I have no detailed knowledge of how the website works in fact it is a mystery to me and everybody of my age. However I do not think that the assertion that the Council is hiding information is a reasonable assertion but I am prepared to look into it and come back to you.

### **37.5 Clive Jones asked the Leader of the Council the following question:**

#### **Question**

As the Council has declined to respond to an FOI request on this topic.

Can the Council advise me what actions they have taken in relation to preparing for a no-deal Brexit? Could this include any impacts on the provision of services to our local residents and any actions that may need to be performed by the Council should this event actually happen?

#### **Answer**

I think I covered that in the speech at Council but I will reiterate it. Yellowhammer was restricted. In fact it was so restricted that I did not even know that we were working on it ourselves. In light of the Government releasing those details the Council has shared more information on its preparations.

The Council has established an Officer group of managers from across the authority to plan for Brexit. The group is now meeting weekly and that has been escalated. It is a matrix of a Government resilience planning and it actually started prior to the March date, as I said in Council.

The range of subject areas that the Council is preparing for includes (but not limited to):

- Supply chain disruption – school meals, personal protective equipment etc;
- Staffing – possible loss of staff originating from the EU27 (social care and RE3 have been identified as having the highest exposure to date);
- Data – potential that we are unable to access our own data on data stored within the EU;
- Major Projects – potential for construction projects to be delayed or over budget due to supply chain and currency fluctuations;
- Regulation – Trading Standards/food safety and environmental protection – possible capacity issues due to additional work required.

The planning environment has now included, as I announced at Council, Pauline and I and as we come nearer the date and, the event if it occurs then, that will be extended to the Opposition Members.

#### **Supplementary Question**

I am sorry I missed the Council meeting where you talked about this. Do you think that the Council has been properly resourced by Central Government to cope with “no deal”?



### **Supplementary Answer**

Let me answer that question by really posing a question to you. It is the same as a question I posed to myself. We are not really in the forefront of the problems that might occur and therefore yes probably but I will not know until we completely elaborate the planning and what the planning without a withdrawal agreement means because there is a lot of very loose talk about what “no deal” means. But there is no such thing as “no deal” because there is a structure of agreements which are already there. So to answer your question completely we need to establish what the environment is which we are dealing with at the time and at the moment we are not that clear. If it happens at all.

### **Councillor Jones asked the following additional question:**

It was interesting that you said that Yellowhammer was restricted so did you not know what was happening?

### **Councillor Halsall responded as follows:**

You have asked a supplementary question did I know what was happening? I knew as much as you did quite honestly but I think that the Officers who were also restricted in the information that they could share even with myself have done a typically excellent job in filling out the blanks so we are not without a response if a response is needed.

### **37.6 Pauline Jorgensen asked the Executive Member for Adult Social Services the following question:**

#### **Question**

How do we monitor how satisfied our residents are with the service they get from WBC?

#### **Answer**

We have many ways in which we monitor this. A comments/feedback sheet is sent to customers with all completed assessments including carers assessments, reassessments and reviews. There is a quarterly report on the feedback both positive and areas for improvement. Mental health service, joint health and social care, have a ‘friends and family’ scheme to invite and gather feedback.

In addition to this there is an annual survey for all Adult Social Care customers; it is a Government requirement that we have to carry this out. This includes two areas: overall satisfaction and feeling safe. Satisfaction results from the last survey for the financial year 18/19 showed that 67.1% of customers said they were extremely or very satisfied. The national average was 65%. For feeling safe for the same period 74% and the national average is 69.9%.

Although these are good scores there is obviously room for improvement and we are working to get these figures into the top quartile nationally through our improvement plans in the Department.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Are there any plans you would like to share about how you will monitor progress and share this information about performance going forward?

#### **Supplementary Answer**

It is something I am very conscious of. Basically there are obviously financial pressures in this department as there are in all but we have got to make sure that not only do we

respond to things basically quickly but the quality of response is correct and we have a monthly session with myself and the Director of Adult Social Care. We go through the 16 key criteria to make sure they are all going in the right way and when they are not that we are taking immediate corrective action.

So we are very keen to improve this and keep moving forward.

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

**Question**

Please could the Executive Member for Climate Emergency provide me with an update on the changes to the Blue Badge scheme, including progress on processing new applications?

**Answer**

Some people might not know that Customer Service falls under my remit which is why I am answering this question.

Changes in Blue Badge legislation mean that applicants can consider applying for a Blue Badge if they have a non-visible or hidden condition, which causes them to severely struggle with journeys between a vehicle and their destination. Applications are assessed by considering individual needs, alongside supplementary information submitted by the applicant. If there is not enough evidence to initially support their application, we will request further information from them.

Since launch, on 30 August, we have seen an additional 52 applications in the first week and a further 23 in the second week. Currently, these cases are taking approximately two weeks to process as the team are working hard to absorb the increases alongside the standard applications, with 175 applications in total received in this two week period.

Of all the cases we have referred to the Occupational Therapist so far three badges have been awarded immediately under the Hidden Disability criteria. The Occupational Therapist is unable to fully determine most applications until additional professional supplementary evidence is supplied, as per the DfT guidelines. We are giving people up to 20 days to supply this.

We are now entering into a period of increasing contact from applicants. They are providing us with further evidence so that we can consider their cases and request supplementary information if we initially determine that we need it.

To date we have not received any negative comments or feedback from customers. Our targeted and clear communications before launch have helped immensely to educate and guide people through this process.

I would add to this that the Officers responsible for delivering this were not given a huge amount of guidance from the DfT and were not given a huge amount of time to deliver against this expectation so the fact that they have been able to deliver this without complaint so far from our residents, process all of these additional applications with the team that they have got is absolutely superb and they deserve all of our compliments and all of our congratulations for doing it.

### **37.8 Charles Margetts asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:**

#### **Question**

Climate change, and the recently recognised climate emergency, is a major concern of our times. What action is Cllr Clark, our Lead Member for Children's Services, taking to ensure that the voice of our children and young people are heard?

#### **Answer**

I am pleased to announce that Children's Services have employed a Project Support Officer for Climate Emergency. Her name is Ellen Lucas and she will be with us for 3 days a week for six months working with schools, children and young people to engage them in working towards the Council's vision to be a carbon-neutral authority by 2030. She recently graduated from the University of York with a BA in History and Philosophy and has worked as a lead mentor for the National Citizens Service as well as working with migrants and refugees at Refugee Action York and volunteering in South African townships teaching amongst other things: first aid, health and computer. She is passionate about the climate change agenda and I'm sure you will join me in welcoming her to the role.

I think it is fantastic that we have been able to do this because as we all know who have children they never listen to us so it is more likely that with somebody closer in age to young people there will be more engagement.

### **38. SHAREHOLDERS' REPORT**

*(Councillors UllaKarin Clark, John Halsall, John Kaiser, Charles Margetts, Stuart Munro and Wayne Smith declared personal interests in this item)*

The Executive considered a report setting out the budget monitoring position and an operational update for the period to 31 July 2019.

The Executive Member for Finance and Housing introduced the report and highlighted that WHL had so far built 145 homes and there were currently 72 units on site or about to start on site. In addition WHL was working on a further 254 units on previously identified sites. Councillor Kaiser went through the budget monitoring position of WHL which showed that the full year income was expected to reach just under £4m. The full year operating loss was expected to be £224k, which included the loan repayment of £1m to the Council. The full year loss was therefore expected to be £48k negative to budget.

Councillor Kaiser advised that in relation to Loddon Homes they had a full year expected income of £1.7m with profits of £475k, which reflected a £62k positive variance.

Looking at Berry Brook Homes they were expecting a full year income of £646k with a profit of £464k which reflected a £101k positive variance against budget.

Councillor Margetts highlighted the budget position of Optalis, as set out in the report, and reminded Members that statutory services were due to be transferred from Optalis back to the Council, as previously agreed by the Executive, and this was running to schedule. The TUPE consultation was underway and it was expected that staff would transfer on 1 November. It was noted that this would provide the opportunity to have a one care pathway for all Wokingham residents and improve the quality of service offered.

In addition Optalis was resetting the governance structure of the company which would be slimmed down to give more control to the Executive and Officers and react quicker to things happening in the marketplace. Recruitment of a new CEO was underway and the strategy of the Company would be focussed on efficiency, quality and innovation rather than growth.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 31 July 2019 be noted;
- 2) the operational update for the period to 31 July 2019 be noted.

### **39. TWYFORD COMMUNITY HUB BUSINESS CASE**

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposal to relocate Twyford Library to the Old Polehampton Boys' School.

The Executive Member for Regeneration advised Members that the purpose of this report was to get the go ahead to bid for capital funds to proceed with the relocation of the existing Twyford Library following which a planning application would be submitted.

Councillor Haitham Taylor confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the Polehampton Trust to secure the lease for the site and it was expected that a deal would be entered into that would secure the building whilst meeting the aims of the Trust which were to promote education for the residents of the parish of Twyford.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the relocation of the Twyford Library to the Old Polehampton Boys' School site continue to be supported;
- 2) the financial assessment, including the potential for a £640k capital bid in 2020/21 and the expected benefits for residents, be noted;
- 3) a further report will be received by the Executive detailing the proposed lease arrangements with the Polehampton Trust for its approval.

### **40. ARBORFIELD COMMUNITY FACILITY OPERATOR**

The Executive considered a report setting out the proposal for the Finchampstead Baptist Church (FBC) to be the preferred operator for the new community facility being provided as part of the necessary infrastructure for the Arborfield Strategic Development Location.

The Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement explained that FBC was chosen as the preferred operator as they were already doing a fantastic job at another community site. The reason for getting the FBC in early was so that they could start working with the SDL Team and Crest Nicholson to play an integral role in the design and delivery of the new community facility.

Councillor Kaiser stated that the FBC already had a large operation in Finchampstead and queried whether any commitment on time had been agreed as he would not want them to come back at a later stage and state that they were having difficulty running two centres. Councillor Smith confirmed that extensive discussions had taken place between the FBC, in conjunction with the local Parish Council and Churches on the Green, and the feeling

was that this would not be an issue. He also drew Members' attention to the second recommendation which stated that the Executive would receive a report on the specific terms of agreement and if it was felt that the FBC could not cope with both facilities there would be an opportunity to pull out then.

Councillor Haitham Taylor was pleased that the FBC had come forward to run the facility however she wanted to ensure that the building would be accessible and welcoming for everybody in the community and would be affordable for all who wished to make use of the facility. Councillor Smith confirmed that during discussions all those areas had been covered.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) Finchampstead Baptist Church be the preferred operator for the new community facility within the Arborfield Strategic Development Location, subject to agreement of the terms of lease;
- 2) a report will be received by the Executive at a later date recommending the specific terms of formal agreement with the Finchampstead Baptist Church to operate the community facility within the Arborfield Strategic Development Location.

#### **41. PROCUREMENT BUSINESS CASE – SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM**

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposal to procure a Schools Management Information System for schools and academies in the Borough which would provide a range of functions including pupil database, assessment, Special Education Needs, personnel, financial management etc.

The Executive Member for Children's Services advised that the present contract was due to end in March 2020 and could not be extended. A consultation had been undertaken with schools and academies and they had indicated that they wished the Council to again organise a central procurement.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the commencement of the procurement for a Schools Management Information System (required as the total value of the contract will be over £500k) be agreed;
- 2) once a suitable system has been procured the decision to award the contract be delegated to the Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Children's Services.

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