



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE PERIOD

29 JULY 2020 to 9 SEPTEMBER 2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Susan Parsonage'.

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 9 September 2020



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our Vision

A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business

Enriching Lives

- Champion outstanding education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background.
- Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to complement an active lifestyle.
- Engage and involve our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity which people feel part of.
- Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.

Safe, Strong, Communities

- Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people.
- Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to prevent the need for long term care.
- Nurture communities and help them to thrive.
- Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all.

A Clean and Green Borough

- Do all we can to become carbon neutral and sustainable for the future.
- Protect our borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas.
- Reduce our waste, improve biodiversity and increase recycling.
- Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.

Right Homes, Right Places

- Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future.
- Build our fair share of housing with the right infrastructure to support and enable our borough to grow.
- Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment.
- Help with your housing needs and support people to live independently in their own homes.

Keeping the Borough Moving

- Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways.
- Tackle traffic congestion, minimise delays and disruptions.
- Enable safe and sustainable travel around the borough with good transport infrastructure.
- Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners to offer affordable, accessible public transport with good network links.

Changing the Way We Work for You

- Be relentlessly customer focussed.
- Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around you.
- Communicate better with you, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough.
- Drive innovative digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
AUDIT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 29 JULY 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 9.15 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Bill Soane (Chairman), Dianne King (Vice-Chairman), Rachel Burgess, Maria Gee, Angus Ross, Daniel Sargeant and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Also Present

Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Helen Thompson, Ernst and Young
Justine Thorpe, Ernst & Young
Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director Governance
Stephen Murtagh, Internal Audit
Bob Watson, Head of Finance

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence received.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3 June 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman at a future opportunity.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no Public questions.

5. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

6. ERNST & YOUNG AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received an update on the Ernst & Young audit.

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

- Helen Thompson advised Members that there was little to update on since the previous Committee meeting. The report considered by the Committee at its June meeting had highlighted the identified risks to this year's Financial Statements audit.
- Justine Thorpe indicated that the Government recognised the increased pressure on local government following the Covid 19 pandemic. As a result, the accounts production deadline was now 31 August. The accounts should be audited by the end of November.
- Ernst & Young were having regular meetings with senior members of the finance team regarding the progress of the Financial Statements. Draft Financial Statements were expected shortly with the audit beginning next week.
- Ernst & Young would complete the second part of its visit at the end of September in order to finish the audit results report. The Statement of Accounts and the Audit result report would be taken to the November Committee meeting.

- No further risks had been identified. Corroboration would be sought from the auditors of the pension funds that the indicated timescales for producing the assurance letter to Ernst & Young, would be met.
- Councillor Burgess asked how Ernst & Young would be forming its going concern opinion that year and what evidence it would be using. Helen Thompson indicated that this was an area of more focus this year. The management assessment of concern would be considered and conversations would be had with the Finance team as to the level of detail expected. There was a presumption of going concern. There was a possibility for audits such as Wokingham, which had components, that there would potentially be a material uncertainty over the financial viability of a sub. However, it was unlikely that the Council itself would be anything other than a going concern. Ernst & Young would review the level of disclosures in relation to going concern and post balance sheet events. Certain categories of council would have to go through a consultation process, to review for consistency with others.
- With regards to post balance sheet events, the current volatility of the rental market and the likelihood of the receipt of all rental income, Councillor Gee asked whether the values of commercial properties would be looked at in the audit. Helen Thompson stated that the investment properties were required to be revalued each year at fair value. Ernst & Young real estate colleagues would be involved in that element of the audit. Councillor Gee stated that she had been informed that properties that had been held for less than a year did not need to be revalued until March 2021. Helen Thompson explained that as the fair value requirement was of up to 31 March 2020, Ernst & Young would consider whether an appropriate exercise had been undertaken. Given the circumstances of the year, they would expect them all to be reviewed unless purchased very close to the issuing of the balance sheet.
- Councillor Shepherd-DuBey questioned whether the level of borrowing was as expected. Helen Thompson commented that this was perhaps a question more for Council officers; however, she could confirm that the level of borrowing may be considered as part of the value for money assessment on commercialisation and purchase of investment properties.

RESOLVED: That the update on the Ernst & Young audit be noted.

7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2019-20

The Committee received the Treasury Management Outturn 2019-20.

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

- During 2019-2020, the Council had adhered to all of its prudential indicators whilst minimising external debt and creating a significant revenue contribution with robust risk management arrangements.
- The Treasury Outturn position was a net £380,000 favourable against the projected budgets.
- Councillor Sargeant asked whether the Table on page 19 was still an estimate. The Head of Finance indicated that it was not and would be corrected.
- Councillor Sargeant commented that the report showed another good year of treasury management. He noted that £1.6million had been brought in through the property investment portfolio.
- Councillor Ross stated that it was interesting to note that the highest average rate of return percentage was from the investment properties.

- In response to a question from Councillor Gee regarding the 5.11% rate of return and investment properties, the Head of Finance indicated that the 5.11% return was on the two investment properties that the Council had run through its treasury management portfolio. These were located outside of the Borough. The Council was not allowed to borrow to fund these properties so treasury investment funds were used to buy these properties. The 5.11% was the gross figure coming in from incomes and the Council then charged a notional rate of interest against those properties to offset the financial impact on residents. The deduction made in terms of the notional rate was 2.75% for the debt financing charges. A minimum revenue provision of 0.667 was also charged. The asset repayment was backed by the value of the asset the Council had as it was classed for investment purposes. The Council was making minimum revenue provision for an anticipated movement in a prudent way should the asset value drop. Councillor Gee commented that the net return was 2.36% and the amount actually released to the revenue account was 1.695%. The Head of Finance emphasised that 2.75% was a notional rate which was likely set high to ensure that all the recovery costs were covered.
- Councillor Gee felt that Table 2, which showed the estimated debt levels, was misleading. The peak debt was not what could be anticipated in 2023, as more debts and projects would likely be taken on.
- Councillor Burgess commented that Table 2 was forwards looking and that she was surprised that there was little reference to the impact of Covid 19 within the report. She was interested to hear the extent the forecasts within Table 2 would have now changed because of the pandemic.
- The Head of Finance indicated that potentially £105million of capital expenditure would be deferred by 12 months due to the impact of the pandemic on the Council's cash flows. Not all the £105million would be funded by debt; some would be funded by developer contributions. Finance could only work to the Capital Programme as set out for the next 3 years. The debt would increase up to 2023 and would then start to be paid off through income receipts and capital receipts coming in and some of the regeneration assets.
- The Head of Finance emphasised that the debt taken out was affordable in terms of the Council's repayment profile and the value of assets held exceeded the level of debt.
- Councillor Gee referred to a saving of £380,000 on interest receipt on long-term balances. However, it also appeared to refer to working balances, which were not referenced within the report. The Head of Finance explained that the £380,000 was the net position around what the Council had in the budget to pay for debt financing and what the Council had in the budget around expected income receipts from interest on balances that had been invested.
- Councillor Gee questioned how working balances related to treasury management. The Head of Finance referred to the Treasury Investment Strategy. The Council had at any point in time, balances of over £100million coming in via precepts and business rates, which were paid out across the year.
- Councillor Shepherd-DuBey commented that external borrowing was £52million. She questioned why this was more than previous years. The Head of Finance indicated that the Council had approved a larger and more expansive capital programme for regeneration and investment.
- Councillor Shepherd-DuBey expressed concern around the property investment figure within the report and questioned what would happen if the Council lost a tenant. The Head of Finance clarified that the properties were the two investment properties outside of the Borough.

- The Head of Finance explained that the Property Investment Group managed a wider property investment portfolio. Councillor Shepherd-DuBey asked how the property investment process was monitored.
- Councillor Burgess questioned why there were so few investments with fund managers and how the Council could ensure that investments were invested ethically. The Head of Finance explained that the investments made with fund managers were mostly historic. The Council was not aware of the ethnical status of the portfolios. Most local authority investments were for 12 to 24 months whereas fund managers tended to want to invest for longer. In addition, a local authority could not go bust whilst owing money to another local authority and this would be underwritten by central government.
- Councillor Burgess commented that the investment balance on p19 of the agenda referred to £158million and elsewhere in the report, £135million was referenced. The Head of Finance agreed to come back on this matter. Following the meeting, he clarified that the £135m referred to the average balance of investments held over the year and the £158m was the actual investment balance as at 31 March 2020.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be recommended to Executive on 30th July 2020;
- 2) the managed repayment of debt over time which illustrates the increased borrowing required to fund key Council priorities which in turn generate income streams (to repay debt) and provides revenue funding for vital statutory services (see graph in table 2), be noted;
- 3) the asset value created through the Council's capital investments compared to the debt required to generate the asset value (see graph in table 2), be noted;
- 4) the capital investments made in the Council's priorities for its community, by category (see table 1), be noted;
- 5) the Treasury Management report in Appendix A, that shows that all approved indicators have been adhered to and that prudent and safe management has been adhered to, be noted.

8. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT

Members considered a report on Corporate Risk Management.

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

- The Assistant Director Governance outlined the Committee's responsibilities around risk management as detailed in the Constitution. As it was the start of the municipal year, it was thought timely for Members to consider what training needs the Committee might have around risk management.
- Councillor King felt that more training on risk management would be helpful for Members particularly as times were now more complicated due to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- Councillor Gee questioned the cost of training and was informed that the training was usually provided internally.
- The Corporate Risk Register had been updated since it was last presented to the Committee in June. There had been presentational changes. Also each risk was

described more clearly, timelines had been added to mitigating actions and each risk was now linked to one of the seven Council priorities.

- Four new risks had been added covering Telephony (risk no.15), IT Infrastructure (risk no. 16), Public Sector Equality Duty (risk no. 17), and Pandemic response (risk no. 18). No risks had come off the register but it was likely that over time, more risks would be added and some removed.
- Councillor Burgess thanked officers for all the work that had gone in to the refreshed Corporate Risk Register. She went on to question why the pandemic risk had only been given a medium rating, and referred to the possibility of a second wave of Covid 19. The Assistant Director Governance referred to the mitigations in place including the Local Outbreak Plan. The Council's emergency response had been well tested.
- Councillor Burgess stated that it was good that carbon reduction targets had been included relating to the climate emergency. However, Full Council had now considered the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the plan still needed work. She questioned whether the risk should therefore have a higher rating. The Assistant Director Governance responded that the Risk Register had been published prior to the Plan's review by Council but feedback from the Council meeting would be taken into consideration.
- Councillor Sargeant felt that the climate emergency risk should be rated higher.
- Councillor Gee questioned whether the pandemic risk should be positioned elsewhere on the matrix. The Assistant Director Governance responded that there was an element of subjectivity in the assessment of the risks. The impact of the particular risk was not being underestimated. There was a lot of work being undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny regarding the Council's response to the Covid 19 pandemic and this learning would be built in.
- In response to a question from Councillor Gee, the Assistant Director Governance indicated that each risk tended to be considered in isolation but that making linkages between them could strengthen the overall register.
- Councillor Ross stated that he was pleased to see the inclusion of the Local Plan within the Corporate Risk Register. Councillor Burgess felt that whilst the rating for this risk was now correct the description could be clarified further.
- Councillor Shepherd-DuBey expressed concern around governance during the pandemic. She commented that governance was still not back to normal. The Council had not established a Covid scrutiny committee in the same way as some other councils had, and the public were not currently able to speak at Planning Committee meetings. The Assistant Director Governance responded that the Council had been quick to implement virtual council meetings. Whilst the March Council meeting had been postponed, the business of that meeting had now been transacted. Councillor Ross referred to meetings between the Group Leaders during this period. Councillor Burgess indicated that these had been outside of the democratic process and had been more for briefing purposes.
- Councillor Shepherd-Dubey questioned why telephony was a separate risk and not included within the IT infrastructure risk, and was informed that it was to ensure that it was not subsumed within the IT infrastructure risk. There were specific issues around some of the telephony equipment at Shute End.
- Councillor Shepherd-Dubey asked who the Equalities Champions were. The Assistant Director Governance would provide a list.
- With regards to the Risk Management Policy and Guidance, Ernst & Young had identified that it had been some time since they had been reviewed, although the Assistant Director Governance noted that the last review by the Audit Committee was less than two years ago in September 2018. Changes related to the new

Community Strategy and Corporate Delivery Plan, a new paragraph on the impact of Covid-19, clarification on the role of Council risk facilitator, and emphasising links to the Local Code of Corporate Governance and the Annual Governance Statement.

- Councillor Ross asked who the policy and guidance was aimed at and suggested that there could be more around how the Executive Members challenged the relevant Directors on individual risks. The Assistant Director Governance agreed that the dialogue and challenge between the Executive Members and Directors needed to work well for effective scrutiny of the individual risks.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the risks and mitigating actions of the Council's corporate risks as detailed in the attached CRR (Appendix A), be noted;
- 2) the updated Enterprise Risk Management policy and guidance (Appendix B) be approved and its onward submission to the Executive agreed;
- 3) what further training the Committee requires to discharge its responsibilities with regard to Risk Management, be considered.

9. 2019/20 INTERNAL AUDIT & INVESTIGATIONS ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received the 2019/20 Internal Audit and Investigations Annual Report.

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

- During the 2019/20 year, there was one new Category 3 audit, for the audit of equalities. With regards to 2019/20 Public Sector Equality Duty, the audit had noted that the Council had made progress in this area with the more consistent application of Equalities Impact Assessment to inform decision-making and training for staff. However, there remained further work to undertake including updating the Equality Policy.
- The Council would be reviewing its equality objectives, which had been last considered in 2017. Scrutiny would also be looking at the issue of equalities.
- Since March, Internal Audit had been focused on Covid 19 work. Some staff had been redeployed to assist in the response to the pandemic and others had been supporting finance. The Internal Audit Plan for the year would be amended and presented to the Committee for review in September.
- In response to a question from Councillor Shepherd-DuBey, the Assistant Director Governance suggested that where any area in an audit had been identified as being less than satisfactory, he would bring either the key findings and recommendations of the audit to the Committee or circulate the audit report. Members welcomed this. Councillor Burgess welcomed further detail on the lower rated audits and asked that the equalities audit report be circulated to Members.
- Councillor Gee asked how many members of staff were in the Internal Audit team and if the Assistant Director Governance was satisfied that there was sufficient staff to undertake the revised scope of work. The Assistant Director Governance commented that there were 10 members of staff and that it was a shared service with Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead. Audit work was also undertaken on behalf of Bracknell and Rushmoor Councils. He was confident that the team would be able to discharge its duty.

- In response to a question from Councillor Gee regarding the Public Health audit, the Assistant Director Governance indicated that some follow up work had been due in March but that this had been curtailed because of the pandemic. Many of the issues identified had been addressed, but he would provide a further update at the November committee meeting.
- Councillor Burgess asked how actions against Very High and High concerns were checked. The Assistant Director Governance indicated that confirmation and evidence would be sought.

RESOLVED: That this report be received and noted as a source of independent assurance regarding the risk, control and governance environment across the Council, and that the outcomes from 2019-20 Internal Audit and Investigations work and the resultant 'Substantially Complete and Generally Effective' opinion to the Annual Governance Statement, be noted.

10. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ANTI-FRAUD AND ANTI-CORRUPTION POLICIES

The Committee received a report on the review of the Council's Anti Fraud and Anti Corruption Policies.

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

- Members were advised that it was good practice to review the Council's Anti Fraud and Anti Corruption policies, which were included in the Council's Constitution.
- The Assistant Director Governance advised that the changes themselves were fairly minor. He asked Members for their views on how the policies could be better publicised so that more staff and public were aware of the Council's stance.
- Councillor Burgess asked if there was a level of detail underneath the policies such as a fraud risk register or a money laundering risk register. She commented that it would be useful for Members to see where the Council was most at risk. With regards to the anti-fraud policies, Councillor Burgess commented that it would be helpful to have reference to more current trends such as cyber phishing emails.
- The Assistant Director Governance indicated that there were not underpinning risk registers but this could be looked at.
- CIPA produced anti-fraud guidance and self-assessment. This could be used to assess where the Council was concerning fraud risks. Councillor Burgess felt that this was a key element of Members' training.
- Councillor Burgess questioned whether consideration had been given to the production of a policy about the Criminal Finances Act 2017. The Assistant Director Governance agreed to look into the matter.
- Councillor Ross felt that the policies could be better publicised on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the proposed amendments to the Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy, the Whistleblowing Policy, the Anti-Money Laundering Policy, Prosecutions and Sanctions Policy, Anti-Bribery Policy and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) policy be agreed and be recommended to Council via the Constitution Review Working Group.

11. LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Committee considered the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

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

- The current Local Code of Corporate Governance had been in place since June 2016.
- The revised Code had been updated in the format suggested following a review of good practice from other local authorities.
- The Code had been assessed to reflect the position of the Council particularly in the light of the new Community Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan.
- The Council's Local Code was consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework which set out best practice for local government corporate governance. The principles and sub-principles expressed in the Framework had been considered, and continued to be relevant.
- The Code would be taken to Full Council in September for approval.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance (Appendix A of the report) be reviewed;
- 2) the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance be recommended to Council.

12. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20

The Committee received the Annual Governance Statement.

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

- The Assistant Director Governance indicated that the Annual Governance Statement was in draft form and it was an opportunity for the Audit Committee to feed into the process. The AGS formed part of the Financial Statements which the Committee would consider later in the year.
- The Assistant Director Governance highlighted the five areas identified in the previous year's Annual Governance Statement as requiring improvement, and their current status. He went on to highlight the improvement plan for the future year.
- Councillor Burgess questioned what the issue was around the use of market supplements and honorariums. The Assistant Director Governance responded that it was ensuring that the policies were consistently and fairly applied across the Council. This would be addressed within the new People's Strategy.
- Councillor Burgess was of the view that the results of the internal audit of equalities should be referenced as it had been rated as a 3.
- Councillor Gee commented that the revenue capital monitoring reports were only considered by the Executive. She felt that there should be scrutiny of this matter prior to its consideration by the Executive and for this area to be strengthened. The Assistant Director Governance indicated that overview and scrutiny had previously scrutinised the budget proposals and would be doing so again. The Audit Committee received assurance via the Internal Audit team on the Council's major financial systems, and also via external audit with regards to the Financial Statements. Councillor Gee commented that the Audit Committee looked at treasury management and that she was of the view that the Committee should also consider capital monitoring. It was suggested that this proposal be considered by the Constitution Review Working Group.
- Councillor Gee stated that if a decision was taken to do something then the Public Sector Equality Duty had to be taken into account, but not if a decision was taken not to do something. The Assistant Director Governance agreed to refer the matter

to the Equalities Champions and the scrutiny committee that would be looking at the matter of equalities.

- In response to a question from Councillor Ross, the Assistant Director Governance explained that the Council would be compliant in relation to home to school transport appeal arrangements once a new appeal process was fully implemented.
- Councillor Shepherd-DuBey stated that there needed to be a mechanism for escalating issues relating to the Public Sector Equality duty.
- Councillor Shepherd-DuBey was of the view that the property investment process was not sufficiently transparent. She also felt that a number of matters had been put forwards without prior scrutiny or audit consideration or visible business cases. The Assistant Director Governance indicated that Internal Audit could be asked to look at the property investment process. With regards to the decisions and business cases, he would discuss with the Chief Executive and Directors, whether it should be included in the Annual Governance Statement.
- Councillor Gee suggested that the Committee not vote on the second recommendation of the report as the Annual Governance Statement was currently in draft. The updated Annual Governance Statement would be considered as part of the Financial Statements and a progress report would be taken to the November meeting.
- It was suggested that the third recommendation be amended.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the draft 2019/20 AGS be considered, and any specific matters which should be brought to the attention of Council or Executive identified.
- 2) requests that update reports be provided to the Audit Committee summarising progress in achieving an governance improvement action plan, on those areas identified as requiring action in the AGS Improvement Plan as contained in this report, and any additional actions added as a result of this plan going from draft to final.

13. FORWARD PROGRAMME 2020-21

The Committee considered the forward programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

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

- The Assistant Director Governance indicated that he would bring the risk management audit findings back to the September Committee and the results of the Committee's self-assessment of its effectiveness.
- An updated Internal Audit Plan would be taken to the September meeting.
- Councillor Gee requested an update on the Public Health audit at the November meeting.
- Helen Thompson indicated that the Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and Ernst & Young letter report would be taken to the November meeting. The Audit Results report would also be taken to November.
- It was noted that the November Committee would move from 4 November to 23 November because of a shift in the audit deadlines.

RESOLVED: That the forward programme be noted.

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SPECIAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 30 JULY 2020 FROM 8.30 PM TO 8.50 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Malcolm Richards (Chairman), Lindsay Ferris, John Halsall, Clive Jones and Wayne Smith (substituting for John Kaiser)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor John Kaiser.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Special Council Executive Committee held on 22 April 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Mayor at a later date.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received.

5. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions received.

**6. CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN:
PROPOSED SUBMISSION PLAN**

The Committee considered a report setting out the recommendations from the Executive in relation to the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan,

The Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement, on behalf of the Executive, introduced the report and highlighted the widespread consultation that had been carried out over a number of years and the fact that a number of proposed waste and mineral sites had been considered but were found unsuitable and therefore removed from the Plan. Councillor Smith highlighted the intention to carry out community engagement on the Plan and supporting documents for six weeks from 3 September 2020.

Councillor Jones was pleased with the contents of the Plan and highlighted a number of items within the Plan including the fact that it stated amongst other things that the proposals would manage waste where created, improve and protect biodiversity and protect ancient woodland and veteran trees and hedgerows. He was particularly pleased that the sites that had been considered previously, and which had been unpopular with residents, had not been included. Councillor Jones queried whether new sites could be included in the Plan once it had been approved. Councillor Smith drew Members' attention to the Statements of Common Ground, which had been approved at Executive earlier that evening, and stated that he could not envisage a situation, other than if something major occurred, where a site could be added once the Plan had been approved.

Councillor Ferris asked for clarification on what constituted "minor amendments" as specified in recommendation 4). Councillor Smith confirmed that this related to non-material amendments such as rewording and correction of typing errors. If a site was put

forward through the consultation process then the Plan would have to go back through the whole process again.

Councillor Smith confirmed that although the Plan would last for 10 years it was likely that it would be reviewed after 5 years.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan Proposed Submission Plan and supporting documentation be approved for publication and public consultation under Regulation 19;
- 2) community engagement on the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Proposed Submission Plan and associated supporting documents be authorised to take place for 6 weeks from Thursday 3rd September 2020;
- 3) the submission of the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Proposed Submission Plan, and supporting documents to the Secretary of State for independent examination in public, under Regulation 22 be authorised;
- 4) the Director of Place and Growth, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement, be authorised to agree minor amendments necessary to the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Proposed Submission Plan and other supporting documents prior to consultation. Any minor modifications would consist of non-material amendments such as rewording and correction of typing errors;
- 5) the appointed Inspector be requested to recommend modifications to the submitted Joint Plan, in the event that the Inspector considers that such modifications would make the plan sound.

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 30 JULY 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.25 PM**

Committee Members Present

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

Other Councillors Present

Chris Bowring
Gary Cowan
Andy Croy
Michael Firmager
Paul Fishwick
Maria Gee
David Hare
Clive Jones
Sarah Kerr
Andrew Mickleburgh
Imogen Shepherd-DuBey
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey
Bill Soane

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Charles Margetts.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 28 May 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and will be signed by the Leader of Council at a later date.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor UllaKarin Clark declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6, Shareholders' Report, by virtue of the fact 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 6, 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 6, Shareholders' Report, by virtue of the fact he was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of Wokingham Housing Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd. Councillor Kaiser remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

4.1 Philip Challis had asked the Leader of the Council the following question but as he was unable to attend the meeting a written response was provided:

Question

Would you agree that Taylor Wimpey have done a good job in creating the Loddon Countryside Amenity Area adjacent to Loddon Park (Sandford Farm) development, including a path which extends right up to an old bridge over the River Loddon which for safety reasons is closed off. Would you further agree with residents' disappointment that despite £250,000 funding from Taylor Wimpey and the willingness of Sustrans to provide further funding that the Council have failed to upgrade this bridge over the Loddon and provide the envisaged good links into the wider network of footpaths and provide a pedestrian/cycle link to Twyford. Would he explore the possibility of completing the reinstatement of this bridge given the current emphasis the Government are placing on walking and cycling.

Answer

The benefits of active travel (by bike or foot) have been integral to our plans to manage the impact of growth in Wokingham for many years and our policies, decisions and capital investment schemes have an enabling impact on this objective. More specifically the cycleway and greenways projects are part of a joined up strategy to enable active travel connectivity between our many settlements. Climate change and Covid 19 emphasise the importance of these initiatives for the environment, health and wellbeing, show that we have been a forward thinking authority in this area.

The Country Park at Sandford Farm will provide an enjoyable open space for local residents on completion of the snagging items identified by Officers at WBC. Taylor Wimpey tell us that they will complete the outstanding remedial works this month and Officers hope to carry out a final inspection before July.

There are three bridges at Sandford Farm, one of which being the Bailey bridge referred to, currently in the ownership of Summerleaze and Taylor Wimpey. The bridge is closed to public access as on investigation it was found to need replacement. As part of their planning commitments for Sandford Farm, Taylor Wimpey provided £30,000 to repair and renovate the bridge; this amount is insufficient to cover replacement. Officers are currently investigating how to move forward with this issue. There is a possibility that the bridge could be replaced and included within our wider greenways network because of the benefits this route provides for residents. We are in very early discussions with the landowners as well as undertaking further investigative works to assess the specification for and cost of replacement.

4.2 Elizabeth Mayers asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Following your social media posts incorrectly linking Black Lives Matter with the atrocious killings in Forbury Gardens do you accept that you have destroyed the trust and confidence of black, anti-racist residents and staff at WBC, failing in your duty to foster good relations and, some would say, inflaming racial division? As a result will you be considering your position?

Answer

I was as shocked and disgusted at the killing of George Floyd as any other right thinking person and it is my sincere hope that the world can change for the better as a result of the outcry it has produced.

I completely support the message, principles, and the aims of Black Lives Matter in the UK. I have always been opposed to discrimination in all its forms. I understand the need today to have a clear focus of tackling racism wherever it is found.

The senseless stabbings in Forbury Gardens underline the fragility of life. One of the victims was a very popular Holt teacher James Furlong. It is difficult to find words to console in such a dreadful circumstance. It is impossible to understand the motive for such actions.

None of my social media posts have linked Black Lives Matter with the killings in Forbury Gardens.

In case there was any possibility of a mistaken conflation, I posted a clarification immediately which stated: "I would like to make it clear that there is no suggestion that the Black Lives Matter march that afternoon had anything to do with what has now been described as a terrorist incident."

Wokingham Borough Council is antiracist, promotes equality and celebrates diversity. We are determined to do better to ensure that every resident in the Borough feels truly valued. It will continue to do so whilst I am Leader.

We are undertaking a survey with our communities to listen to anybody who has experienced racism in any form as well as anybody with views on how this issue can be tackled. In particular the importance that Black Lives Matter. It is deliberately an open, listening exercise that acknowledges there will be problems we have not seen and answers we have not thought of. The survey is open throughout July and August and I urge everybody to take part.

I will not be reconsidering my position. This is an important community issue and I will continue to lead the Council on behalf of the communities, working with the independent BME Forum, and listening to staff and residents on their views on this vitally important issue. Working with Council Officers I will address the inequalities that are identified and I determinedly take forward our ongoing quest for community cohesion.

If any comments I have made have been offensive to anyone I apologise unreservedly; that was never my intention. Rather by reaching out, I hope to bring residents together. I fully support Nelson Mandela who said, "I detest racialism, because I regard it as a barbaric thing, whether it comes from a black or a white man".

Supplementary Question

Sadly your answer and the things you say on equality feel pretty insincere and scripted. Apart from your comments at the previous Council meeting, saying that you would not support Black Lives Matter, and the social media posts in which you actually apologised in 'Wokingham Today' on 25th June acknowledging what you did was an entire mistake "I have done damage to myself and the Council".

These things seem to reflect genuine sentiments a little more than the answer that you have given. The fact that you still believe that Black Lives Matter is about George Floyd's death shows your lack of understanding or knowledge about the Human Rights' Movement which was actually founded in 2013.

As the Leader of the Council which is apparently hardwired to promote equality if you are not prepared to reconsider your position what steps and commitment are you prepared to make today to better educate yourself, and your fellow Councillors, on these crucial and sensitive matters to ensure that your behaviour does not contravene the Councillor's Code of Conduct again?

Supplementary Answer

I do not believe my conduct has contravened the Councillor Code of Conduct nor the Nolan Principles. I believe that there is another agenda. I reiterate where we are. As a Council we are antiracist, we promote equality and celebrate diversity and we will do our very best to make that happen.

4.3 Beth Rowland asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

Question

The enforced lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that a considerable portion of our residents will have been furloughed from their jobs on 80% of their normal salary. Some will have lost their jobs altogether – over the next few months many more will be unemployed as companies are forced to stop trading. That means that many more of our residents and their families will be forced to live on benefits with the problems that brings to children and young people. Will this Authority work with local charities and organisations including Berkshire Credit Union to support families living in poverty and debt?

Answer

Wokingham Borough Council is working closely with the third sector to support residents in the Borough.

We are working with our residents, which include tenants, site dwellers, leaseholders and licensees and others at this difficult time.

If, as many are, they are experiencing financial difficulties we will actually work with them. If they are struggling to pay their Council Tax or money that they owe to the Council we will work with them on an individual basis to understand their personal circumstances and come up with a sustainable payment plan.

We will also look at what they will be entitled to e.g. means tested benefits to maximise their incomes or they may even be able to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment, Local Welfare or signpost them to access many of the great charities that are working in Wokingham.

We also signpost them to the following independent money and advice organisations such as: National Debt, Money Advice Service and Step Change.

Finally I guess even though the Council is in step with the guidance of the CAB and the Council Tax Protocol and best practice, which is agreed by the LGA, it is but a short step

for us to formally adopt that Protocol and to indicate our commitment to our residents who require help and as such I will commit to signing the CAB Council Tax Protocol Agreement as agreed with the LGA. That said we will continue to review our procedures to ensure the best outcome for all residents.

4.4 Carol Jewell had asked the Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions the following question but as she was unable to attend the meeting a written answer was provided:

Question

Woodley Town Council declared a Climate Emergency in October 2019 and a working group was formed to monitor the effects of climate change on the Town and its carbon footprint. Nine months later the committee has still not met as its Chairman, the leader of the Town Council, is awaiting action from this Borough Council. The forced lockdown during the Covid 19 pandemic has seen much reduced traffic especially on our road network. How is this Council going to work with both local Town and Parish Councils to take advantage of this to maintain the reduced levels of pollution that have been seen throughout the country and to encourage walking and cycling?

Answer

Having looked into the points you raise my understanding is that the Chairman was waiting for the Deputy Town Clerk to write Woodley's Climate Emergency Action Plan and was not awaiting action from Wokingham Borough Council. For information I have been consulted as part of the review of your Action Plan and have provided the Leader of Woodley Town Council with detailed feedback.

The response to the Covid 19 outbreak has provided evidence that we can do things differently. The lockdown resulted in a significant reduction in transport, workplace commuting in Wokingham went down by 54% during April. The Council has been engaging with businesses in order to understand how they can be supported through the green economic recovery. In our latest survey, businesses said that a lower carbon footprint was a positive impact of the lockdown and some will consider increasing their flexibility to allow more regular home working.

However, these have been challenging times for businesses, as some have not been able to function over the last few months. Because of the wide variety of businesses across the Borough, it is relevant that we engage with them effectively, the Council needs to consider their priorities and business model. For example, in town centres, there are a very high number of businesses in the retail and hospitality sector who do not have the option to work from home.

The Department for Transport has made some funding available for Emergency Active Travel measures and this is to be used to try and encourage and enable more people to travel on foot or by bike throughout the current social distancing but also beyond. So far we have been awarded £76k for the works which were completed around Wokingham Town Centre. We are currently working to identify further temporary measures across the Borough which we can implement quickly in order to help encourage further cycling and walking. There is up to £605k available to WBC, however the DfT criteria are quite strict and so we will only know later whether any of our proposals are accepted. Throughout lockdown the My Journey Team has continued to support people by assisting with training and advice and also loaning bikes to key workers and ensuring those returning to cycling are able to check and maintain their bicycles for safety. Now the rules are relaxing, there

is going to be more training available, though we have found that these courses are very popular and are already almost fully booked. For further training and advice people can visit the My Journey Webpages for routes and tips on both walking and cycling.

The Council is currently working on producing individual carbon footprint reports for each Town and Parish Council that will guide their actions towards becoming carbon neutral. While dialogue has already started with representatives from Towns and Parish Councils, we are working on creating a closer relationship over the coming months. The Council will engage individually with representatives to align our plans and create a joint approach to take advantage of the reduction in car use caused by the lock down. I have also promised the Leader of Woodley Town Council direct and community specific interaction with the Wokingham Borough Council's Climate Officers and myself over and above the Town Clerk's Forum. I want to ensure that Woodley receives all the help and support it requires in achieving your own climate objectives and reducing your carbon footprint.

4.5 James Vyvyan-Robinson asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

What action is the Council Executive going to take to rectify the A33 road surface noise bearing in mind the severe and life changing impact the increased noise is having on the mental health and wellbeing of local residents?

Answer

The Council has commissioned WSP, who are a specialist consultancy, to investigate the noise levels along the A33 corridor and to look at what measures are required to effectively mitigate the impact on local residents. The final report is expected to be issued to the Council by WSP in September which will allow the Council to take a decision on the way forward during October.

Supplementary Question

October sounds rather late to me but I will come back to that, I am sure, in due course.

My question is bearing in mind the Executive's decision to use this new surface are the Executive therefore going to take full responsibility and liability for the impact the increased noise will have on residents?

Supplementary Answer

I can tell you that whatever WSP conclude in their review we will take the appropriate action.

We are taking responsibility for the result of the WSP review whatever that is.

4.6 Colin Brooks asked the Executive Member for Highways and Transport the following question:

Question

In respect of the resurfacing of the A33 bypass near the village of Riseley, please can you explain the criteria used in the decision making process. I am interested to understand if the decision was purely financial and if the increased environmental noise pollution, impact on health, wellbeing and enjoyment of local residents or the potential devaluation of

property (and subsequent negative equity position for newer residents) were included in the process or completely overlooked?

Answer

The Council manages the Wokingham highways network in accordance with UK Pavement Management System recommendations. This is recognised by central Government and the wider industry through its code of practice as a national standard for well maintained and well managed highway infrastructure. It is this system that establishes through technical survey data what parts of the network are prioritised for maintenance and what kind of resurfacing treatment are appropriate for each location.

Like most other highways authorities Wokingham Borough Council makes use of materials such as micro-asphalt and surface dressing to extend the lifespan of the road network before it requires a more expensive full resurfacing treatment. The full life expectancy of the new plane and inlay HRA road of up to 20 years is usually only achieved through the application of a surface dressing or micro asphalt treatment after 8 to 10 years. So it is quite normal practice to do that. All these materials are of course approved by the Highways Authority Product Approval Scheme (HAPAS) which was developed by market experts to offer consistent and clear testing methods for products and systems designed for use in the highways industry.

In addition both micro-asphalt and surface dressing treatments benefit from having a low carbon footprint and are quick to apply, which means less disruption to road users, residents, local businesses and the emergency services.

Lockchip, which was used on the recent resurfacing works on the A33, is a type of surface dressing and differs from conventional surface dressing in that a further layer of bituminous emulsion, which is very difficult to say, is sprayed over the top of the loose stone. As a consequence lockchip generally has a smoother surface with less loose material and looks more like new tarmac. Whilst these kinds of treatment do not last as long as full resurfacing treatment, such as a plane and inlay HRA scheme, they are a very cost effective and important component in the maintenance of the Wokingham highways network. It is worth noting that a full plane and inlay HRA scheme on the recently resurfaced section of the A33 would have cost £1.3million as opposed to the £200k for lockchip.

That said the Council has commissioned WSP, as I have said before, to investigate the noise levels along the A33 and look into what measures might be required to effectively mitigate the impact on local residents. The final report is expected, as I said in September, which will allow the Council to take a decision on the way forward in October.

So the answer is what we are doing is quite standard but we will look at the impact on local residents and take the appropriate action.

Supplementary Question

Could you please explain what change in policy has occurred since the resurfacing of phases 1 and 2 of the A33 in a much smoother and almost quiet material that was used by your department a few years' ago? Could you answer using a like for like comparable please?

Supplementary Answer

I am afraid I am going to have to give you a written answer to that because the previous resurfacing was before my time as Highways Executive and I do not know why they used what they did then versus what they do now but I will certainly get you a written answer.

4.7 Alan Winter asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

In agenda item 8, you've described the proposed new recycling sacks as being made of 'hessian'. Can you reassure residents who are concerned about the environmental impact and guarantee that the hessian bags will be made of natural, recyclable material and not actually made of plastic?

Answer

I can confirm that these types of sacks have been generically called 'hessian' but in fact are made from woven polypropylene fibre with a light plastic coating to ensure resistance to moisture. They are though reusable and can last up to 5 years and so they are not a single plastic use. We will though be investigating the possibility of having them recycled when they are no longer usable.

Supplementary Question

So basically they are not hessian, which is of a natural material, they are made of polypropylene. Firstly can you stop using the term hessian bags as that is entirely misleading and wrong and secondly the continued use of plastic sacks is very disappointing given last week's Council motion on trying to reduce the use of plastics by the Council.

Can I ask has the level of carbon emissions from the sacks been considered in the decision to change the sacks rather than boxes or has that decision been purely about saving money?

Supplementary Answer

Question number 1 – yes you are absolutely right I have asked for the word 'hessian' to be removed from all the publicity material in the future. These bags use a small amount of plastic and that is on the outside to keep the moisture out and that is the sole intention of these things to actually keep our paper and card dry because wet waste gets rejected and costs us a lot of money to actually process. These bags are not really plastic they are polypropylene.

With regard to the question you asked about the carbon emissions there is hardly any plastic in there and I am advised that we will investigate the possibility of having them recycled when they are no longer used.

5. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

5.1 Michael Firmager asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:

Question

What can we do through the Arts and Culture Strategy to help lift Wokingham Borough out of the coronavirus emergency?

Answer

As you know I am a great supporter of arts and culture and am really pleased that we now have a draft strategy that not only seeks to develop and promote our local cultural offer but also highlights the many ways in which arts and culture can impact on social and economic well-being. Whilst the pandemic has sadly curtailed pretty well all 'live' events, performances and attendance at cultural venues, the amount of on-line content that has been made available and widely accessed pays testimony to the importance of arts and culture to all our lives and identities. Particularly in 'lockdown' we have seen how valuable arts and culture is in supporting people's mental health and well-being, providing connection and stimulation and reducing social isolation. Many have also taken the opportunity to develop their own creative talents from baking, hence we ran out of flour, painting, writing and making things.

I would hope that this renewed appetite for arts and culture will continue and that when conditions allow more engagement people will respond to our consultation on the Strategy and help us to grow an even more dynamic, accessible and exciting cultural offer across the Borough. As the severity of the 'lockdown' eases and performances, community events, carnivals, events in libraries and other venues are all once again possible, this will be a great way to draw people out of their homes and encourage them to embrace as well as contribute to the arts and cultural activities on their doorstep.

5.2 Paul Fishwick asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question:**Question**

There have been a number of street trees that have been removed, but not replaced, in the last few years and in many cases the verge is wide enough and conditions suitable to enable replacements to be planted.

Wokingham Borough Council does not have a tree replacement policy but has planted new trees elsewhere. The loss of these trees has changed the street scene making it look more 'urban'. Will the Council ensure street trees are replaced wherever feasibly possible including locations where trees have been lost in the last 5 years?

Answer

The Council acknowledges the importance of street trees in softening the urban street scene and has ensured that the provision of street trees is an integral part of the designs for the major new roads we are building as part of the Strategic Development Locations (SDLs). Whilst we do not currently have a policy on replacing the loss of existing street trees, it is worth noting that it is very rare for the Council to agree to the removal of street trees for anything other than health and safety grounds. In the event that a street tree must be removed for health and safety reasons the decision on whether to plant a replacement tree is taken on a case by case basis.

The Council is in the process of developing a Tree Strategy and it is likely that this document will establish policies that will identify areas with existing valuable treescapes, identify areas that could be improved by tree planting and guide our decisions on the replacement of lost street trees. The development of the Tree Strategy will of course

include a public consultation with residents and we would welcome your personal input into that process.

Supplementary Question

We are really looking at the existing areas at the moment rather than the SDLs. Would you please confirm that a planting schedule will commence as soon as possible and hopefully by this forthcoming planting season, i.e. Autumn/Winter, and try and aim for about a 75% loss of trees where feasible that would be planted this season?

Supplementary Answer

I totally wholeheartedly agree there with you and I very much hope that what you are suggesting will happen.

5.3 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

When are you planning to restart the Local Plan Update Committee, since Grazeley is non-viable without the DCLG funding according to a statement by the Housing Executive at an Executive Committee Meeting and most other sources are not available due to the spending on the pandemic?

Answer

As part of the Local Plan process update we commissioned growth scenarios and I will send you the link. I am sure you know where they are but I will send you the link.

In particular we considered viability on page 103. More detailed analysis of Grazeley and the scenarios also indicated that for both the 10,000 and 15,000 unit tests the initial phases indicated a loss, largely due to the timing of investment needed in the upfront utilities infrastructure.

The next point was in 7.10 of page 103. Both these outcomes indicated a strong case for early investment to secure housing delivery. This highlights the importance of the contribution to the HIF, which is the Housing Infrastructure Fund, in securing the planning and the delivery of new homes.

Grazeley is therefore not an unviable proposition; rather that it is a heavily forwarded funding burden which would have been lifted if we were successful in the Housing Infrastructure Fund and the bid that we put in.

In reply to our bid on 10 March 2019 MHCLG commented that: -

“Wokingham’s bid was an ambitious proposal in an area of high housing demand. However, following due diligence, the bid was found to not meet the gateway criteria, specifically on demonstrating sufficient market failure to require capital investment from the Government. Most of the infrastructure could be funded by other means if for example, it was progressively delivered with the build out of the development, or using loan finance.”

In essence, the Government’s review has confirmed the viability of Grazeley but suggests a different delivery model to that which was selected and supporting our preferred option.

In their reply MHCLG drew attention to the proposed Single Housing Infrastructure Fund as a potential supporting mechanism for us. Full details of that have yet to be announced.

We therefore are considering these options and the factors as well as the responses we received to the consultation. As soon as we have a clear picture the Planning and Transport Policy Member Working Group will resume and I am sure you will be part of that as you were before.

Supplementary Question

MHCLG is also proposing that the OAN, better known as the housing numbers we are required to build, will be changed in late Autumn. We do not seem to know whether it will be raised or lowered. Considering that the Government has said that they want to raise the number of houses built throughout the country how will we take this into account when we are doing the Local Plan Update?

Supplementary Answer

That is a very good question and I can assure you that the team of all Members that you will know have had constant conversations with MHCLG. Also we will be testing because if they do come back to us with a higher number, as you know before in our due diligence in using a well-known barrister and a demographer, we will be testing anything they put forward to us to make sure that it works for us and not just for Government.

5.4 Gary Cowan asked the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement the following question:

Question

From time to time I see planning applications with Officer recommendations approving the removal of trees while other planning applications approve increased traffic on already busy roads.

My question is with regard to the Council flagship policy on climate emergency what specific directions has the Council given to its Planning, Environment and Highway Departments to take climate emergency into consideration when dealing with all planning applications?

Answer

Planning policy is designed to help decision makers balance competing objectives such as protecting our environment and making new places for our people to live and work from. Our existing Core Strategy and Managing Development Delivery Local Plans to 2026, as obviously you know, embed sound planning policies to help us make decisions, mitigate change through infrastructure investment and other measures. Managing change in the public interest will inevitably lead to some very difficult decisions made around traffic and landscaping as part of that balance.

Climate change affects us all and our communities and as they grow the tensions you refer to will remain and we will need to carefully manage those. Policy within the new Local Plan will require developments to provide adequate landscapes and biodiversity gain as well as improved environmental performance with major residential developments being designed to achieve carbon neutral homes. A subsequent Supplementary Planning Document, the SPD, will also be developed to provide additional detail on how development of all types is expected to demonstrate the achievement of the policy requirements, including carbon neutrality.

As with the previous plan the new plan will establish a spatial strategy that allows for more people to choose to live and work where journeys can be undertaken in ways that do not add to climate change and ensure connectivity to allow working from home. Enabling our residents to make a choice for a healthier and more environmentally sensitive options such as walking and cycling for shorter journeys, including links to facilities, such as using local buses and train stations will help meet our collective commitments to address the climate change agenda.

Supplementary Question

My question is really dealing with more now than tomorrow. The Council has committed £50m to fight climate change and it is also opposed to Heathrow airport expansion if it is detrimental to the environment and the Council's carbon footprint. Wokingham Borough Council's planning guidelines are silent, as we stand now, on climate emergency. I have seen many examples where the environment plays second fiddle to random development.

The new Local Plan will need to be updated now to include climate emergency rules for the Planning Department to refer to as material considerations.

The Climate Emergency Action Plan on page 3 states: "This is a Plan for right now and for the future".

My question is what action is being taken right now to refuse planning applications that are detrimental to the environment and the Council's carbon footprint?

Supplementary Answer

It is a very good point and it is a point that we are obviously cognisant that we need to get right. Equally planning policies exist and it is important, and hence the reason why we did go with a draft plan earlier on this year, that we get those updated.

We will obviously look at all applications that come but obviously the larger ones are the bigger ones when it comes to carbon neutrality in terms of what can be done and what the Council can actually do in terms of fuel sources, localities, as you say, in order to make those. We are working on it; I mean obviously it is not an easy fix.

Having been in the energy industry all of my life carbon neutrality is not an easy one to achieve and it is something that we are in constant dialogue, especially with Gregor and his team, to ensure that we try to achieve what is important to us. It is not an easy fix Gary I am not at all saying that we can just change all our policies overnight so that every house is zero-carbon. It is not going to happen that easily but we are working on it and we have an agenda to get there and all those policies will be updated once we get the final Local Plan through.

5.5 Sarah Kerr asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Does the Leader of this Council acknowledge that poverty exists within the Borough?

Answer

Wokingham Borough is one of the least deprived unitary authority areas in England. In fact it ranked as the least deprived (in 2019). However, in all cases, Wokingham Borough does

have some pockets of deprivation and poverty; where households are living on low incomes and have been there for many years.

The Department for Work and Pensions estimate that around 7% of Wokingham Borough children, approximately 2,400 aged 16 years and under, live in low income households compared to 15% in Great Britain, 8% in Bracknell Forest, and 7% in Windsor and Maidenhead.

We have a clear understanding of our demographic profile for the Borough and of where our more vulnerable communities reside; including those who may be most affected by poverty. Nevertheless, we realise there is always more that we can do, and moreover we want to do more to get a greater level of granular detail around the key poverty metrics to aid our understanding. The impact of Covid 19, for example, has seen that almost 18% of our workforce in Wokingham has been furloughed up to 31 May 2020, compared to 24% over the UK as a whole. Naturally, some of these workers on the furlough scheme may experience subsequent issues which we need to understand, track and monitor.

We aim to target our services to support these communities most in need; for areas such as Norreys, Finchampstead South, and some areas within Winnersh ward. Since Wokingham Borough is one of the most affluent areas in the country, there is a significant gap between residents on low income compared to those on higher incomes. Much of the work done by Wokingham Borough Council, and its partners, aims to bridge this gap, enable self-sustaining lifestyles for our vulnerable communities and offer targeted support.

Wokingham Borough Council is a member of the Berkshire Recovery Group which is focussing on four priority themes; one of which relates to individual hardship. Hence from a County perspective, there is a spotlight on this area, and moreover an agreed partnership approach to providing and supporting those communities facing hardship at this challenging time.

It is also important to recognise that the Council itself is, too, suffering unprecedented financial challenges with declining balances. Therefore, we must be judicious in our approach to poverty ensuring that we are truly focusing on and supporting those most in need. Despite this, we are taking a compassionate approach with our Council Tax collections by contacting those residents who may be having difficulty with their payments, engaging with them to understand their individual circumstances and to proactively support them going forward.

Supplementary Question

Thank you very much for your detailed answer and I appreciate that you have acknowledged that there is a problem. The difficulty with statistics obviously is that it depends on what you are actually using as the unit of measurement. As an example the End to Child Poverty Charity measure poverty in possibly a different way because they have actually got, and the last time they took statistics May 2019, 18.4% of our children in this Borough actually live in relative poverty when you take housing costs into consideration. Which is a huge number actually.

I think we have the issue that a lot of people assume that we do not have that much of an issue because we are an affluent area but that obviously makes the gap bigger as you say.

We have had a problem for a long time; it is not just a Covid thing although obviously Covid is going to make it worse and the figures of poverty have been going up and up and up and the

fact that we have food banks and the food banks are increasing the number of people that they are dealing with.

The point is that it has been increasing for a long time and it is set to increase further because of Covid but it has been a problem for a long time. So what I am struggling to understand, and would like to know, is whatever we have been doing as a Council in the past has not been working because we have been increasing our levels of poverty not decreasing.

So what I would like to know is what are we going to be doing now that is different to actually tackle this issue? Not just in relation to Covid but in relation to the fact that we have had increasing poverty levels for years and years and years.

Supplementary Answer

What are we going to be doing now that is different? I do not know that what we have been doing in the past has not worked. I will get back to you on that because you are saying something which I do not know.

My understanding is that we have looked after the people that we need to look after in our Borough and it is our intention to do so. We are a very compassionate Council and trying to find the people who need the help. But as I said in my answer we can only do so if we have the resources to do so. So we, as in Councillors, are going to face some very challenging conversations in ensuring those resources continue to exist.

5.6 Andrew Mickleburgh asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

The fact that poverty is multi-dimensional, and that some of its elements and manifestations are intangible, are just two of the challenges that make poverty complex to measure and track. Notwithstanding, it is vital that this is done in order to serve our residents – to help to reduce numbers falling into poverty, and to help to lift others out of poverty; and to ensure a timely, efficient and effective use of scarce resources. What processes and procedures are in place in our Borough to ensure timely, meaningful and comprehensive data on poverty, in all its manifestations wherever it might exist in our community, is being collected and used to good effect?

Answer

There are a variety of data sources published nationally which we monitor to help identify the levels of poverty that exist within the Borough. The published data also enables us to track how numbers are changing over time and allows us comparisons with neighbouring areas, regional and national trends. The Council regularly monitors all available data sources, along with local intelligence and knowledge to effectively understand our communities and deliver the right services. Nevertheless, we realise that there is always more that we can do, and moreover we want to do more to get a greater level of granular detail around the key poverty metrics to aid our understanding.

Our Community Engagement Team, who work directly with our residents, have a good knowledge of the demographics within the Borough and through their local connections, understand and know residents and communities who may be more vulnerable; and are able to plan and target their support work and initiatives to directly benefit those communities most in need.

The Council is also aware that many residents may be experiencing impacts to their finances during Covid 19. Nearly 18% of our workforce in Wokingham have been furloughed, as I said before, compared to 24% across the UK. Naturally, some of these workers may experience subsequent issues which we need to understand, track and monitor. For those affected households with lower incomes, who traditionally operate on little or no savings, the impact of the Coronavirus and the risk of poverty could be greater. Therefore maintaining our engagement with the communities is vital to continue providing support.

The Council has created a new directorate, Communities, Insight and Change, with the remit of getting an improved bank of insight and data to drive more informed decisions. This will aid our strategic approach around areas we want to focus on as a priority; of which poverty is one. My previous answer outlines the Council's work on a Berkshire level.

5.7 David Hare asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Question

Charities are amongst the many organisations raising alarm that large numbers of people in all parts of the UK are falling into poverty as a consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic. Many of these charities have also seen their own financial resources slashed, and thus their ability to help people in need, suffer as a result of the pandemic. What is WBC's strategy for ensuring that key local charities engaged with tackling poverty in our Borough will be able to meet the increasing demand for vital services provided by charities, despite the current funding crises that some of these charities face.

Answer

I have mentioned in previous responses that we will be facing some severe financial challenges as parlance goes and those on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be faced, as we will be faced, with some very unpalatable choices. We are certainly not going to be able to do everything.

However we have worked very closely with the charities during the emergency and we have an organisation which is now working very well. In response to this guidance we have set up a Service Sustainability Fund to support providers to maintain service continuity during this period of dealing with the Coronavirus. The fund is administered through an application process for additional retrospective funding. This Fund has been promoted to all providers of Adult Services including all those we contract within the Voluntary and Community Sector.

To qualify for reimbursement items of expenditure must be all of the following:

- related to clients in receipt of adult social care services that are funded by Wokingham Borough Council, or related to self-funders within the Wokingham geographical area;
- over and above usual business costs;
- directly related to the Coronavirus emergency;
- in respect of actual payments made.

Several VCS providers have requested and have received funding through this scheme including WADE, CLASP, ASD Family Help, Age UK Berkshire, Young People with Dementia and Ridgeline Trust.

At the start of the outbreak we set up a Wokingham Borough Community Response to meet the needs of vulnerable residents due to Covid 19. This has been a joint working group with the VCS. The focus has also included supporting the VCS through this difficult period. We have supported the VCS to apply for grant applications. We have provided PPE for many local VCS organisations who found it difficult to source reasonably priced PPE on their own and we have provided advice and guidance, via Public Health, on understanding all the guidance issued.

It is also important to recognise that the Council itself is, too, suffering unprecedented financial hardship with declining balances. Therefore, we must be judicious in our approach to poverty ensuring we are truly focusing on and supporting those most in need. Wokingham Borough Council is a member of the Berkshire Recovery Group. Hence from a County perspective, there is a spotlight on this area.

5.8 Bill Soane asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question:

Question

In view of the Government announcement regarding recompense to assist local authorities in their shortfall in income at their leisure centres during the Covid 19 pandemic, will this grant assist the Council in any way, and if so how?

Answer

On the assumption that you are referring to the “75p in the £” scheme in which the Government will recompense principal local authorities for 75% of lost income, subject to a 5% threshold, it has been confirmed that the Council cannot claim for its lost third-party income; i.e. the support of places for leisure. But it is able to claim for any lost, or foregoing, management fee that was budgeted but not received. Details on how to claim are awaited but the Council will be aiming to recover as much of its lost income as permitted.

The cost to the Council as a result of the forced closure of our Leisure Centres is a big financial issue and we will continue to work with our leisure providers, work with other Local Authorities in a similar position and work with Government Departments to alleviate our costs and restore both the financial position for our Council taxpayers and the service provision for our community going forward.

5.9 Chris Bowring had asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question. Due to time constraints the question was not asked and the following written answer provided:

Question

Would the Executive Member tell me how the ‘Tackling Racism Matters’ survey is progressing?

Answer

The survey is open until August 28 and is being promoted via local media, social media and through the BME Forum. We have had about 260 responses to date and are keen to hear from more people in order to make the survey as meaningful as possible. I would urge all residents to take part by visiting the Council’s website and searching for ‘consultations’.

5.10 Andy Croy had asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question. Due to time constraints the question was not asked and the following written answer provided:

Question

Regarding Agenda item 8. Manufacturers of kerbside recycling bags to protect paper and cardboard from water also provide elasticated covers to black bins which also protect the contents from water. For example:

<https://sackmaker.com/kerbside-recycling-sacks.html>

Why have we opted for an expensive full replacement of the black bins when the same result could more quickly and more cheaply be achieved by providing elasticated covers?

Answer

The Council must find a solution to prevent recycling getting wet as this is impacting on the Borough's recycling rates and causing significant environmental and financial cost to the Council.

The Council has commissioned a leading waste consultancy to consider options for a solution to this issue which include the option of elasticated covers for black bins. This will be reported at the Executive on 24th September. The MTFP report to this Executive secures funding for a solution that will be recommended to the September meeting. Elasticated covers have been considered as an option but do not represent a holistic solution in terms of resilience to weather and becoming detached from the vessel/ box.

5.11 Maria Gee had asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question. Due to time constraints the question was not asked and the following written answer provided:

Question

Regarding Item 7, Appendix B Estimated General Fund Balance. The balance on the general fund is now predicted to be £5.1 million at 31 March next year, which is very worrying and unsafe. It should be at a safe level of between £9.3m and £14.3m. This Council has to set the balance in this range as this is policy, because the Council should be taking risk into account and practising good financial management.

Risks were identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan as increasing significantly in 2020/21, and include the risks of further grant reductions, additional service pressures, dependency on future commercial income, and risks around business rate receipts. These risks are certainly higher as a result of the pandemic.

Given that the Government is running out of money, and there is a risk of a second wave of Covid 19 over winter, what plans does the Council have to get the general fund balance back up to the safe level, should lobbying not be successful?

Answer

Despite the fact that this Council has been one of the best financially managed Councils in the country over many years, as demonstrated by the independent assessments set out in the Executive Report, we are indeed facing considerable financial challenges as a result of Covid 19. We have incurred considerable additional costs to support our most vulnerable who have been dependant on our support during such difficult times and we have lost considerable income from activities that help fund what we do, such as car parking and

leisure. As I am sure you are aware the financial impact of this pandemic is being faced by local authorities throughout the country with numerous claiming publicly that they are no longer sustainable.

The judgement of whether this Council has safe balances and its medium to long term financial viability rests with our Statutory Finance Officer, our CFO, who was the author of the MTFP you refer to. It is not a judgement that sits with our politicians. As the Lead Member for Finance you will understand that we discuss the finances of the Council almost daily.

We continue to recognise the importance of strong and robust financial management of our Council taxpayers' money. This will involve ensuring our expenditure remains targeted to those most in need and delivering the key objectives of the Council. We will continue our endeavours to maximise our income streams where appropriate to fund the growing gap between Government grant and the costs of delivering our statutory services. We will further embrace new and innovative ways of working to ensure the provision of our services are most cost effective and efficient in delivering services to our residents whilst maintaining or improving the customer experience. And, as you referenced in your question, we will continue to make representations to the Government to seek the best funding deal for our community.

This work is already underway and in many ways it has never stopped, it just needs to be taken with greater intensity. It also needs to be taken in a calm, considered and planned way focused on achieving the medium term to long term health of the organisation rather than making knee jerk quick fix solutions to restore balances immediately which could generate catastrophic service and financial outcomes further down the road. I am confident we have the calibre of politicians and Officers to do this the right way and in the way we have collectively successfully addressed our financial challenges in the past.

5.12 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey had asked the Executive Member for Finance and Housing the following question. Due to time constraints the question was not asked and the following written answer provided:

Question

Looking at the Capital Monitoring Report there is a quantity of £105M rephased to later years.

Please can you explain what exactly will be impacted by this deferral?

Answer

The detailed schedule of re-phasing is shown on page 64 of this Agenda. The impact of this is that schemes are progressed in a way that minimises our financial risk with regards to ensuring we have the resources secured to fund them, and it ensures the timing of the investment is better aligned to the service need. This approach is part of our strong overall financial management and entirely necessary in the context of the financial challenges we currently face as a result of Covid 19.

5.13 Clive Jones had asked the Executive Member for Environment and Leisure the following question. Due to time constraints the question was not asked and the following written answer provided:

Question

The proposal to use hessian sacks has come to the Executive as part of an update on the MTFP. Can you explain why this has not come to the Executive as an item in its own right with a full business case attached?"

Answer

Changes in the world market for recycled material have meant that wet paper and card is no longer being accepted by recycling plants and this is impacting on the Borough's recycling rates and causing significant environmental and financial cost to the Council. The Council must therefore find a solution to prevent this recycling getting wet. The financial report being considered by this Executive meeting secures funding for a solution to this issue. A further update report will be presented by the Executive on 24th September.

6. SHAREHOLDER'S REPORT

(Councillors Ulla Karin Clark, John Halsall, John Kaiser, Stuart Munro and Wayne Smith declared personal interests in this item)

The Executive considered a report setting out the budget monitoring position of the Council owned companies up to 30 June 2020.

Whilst introducing the report the Executive Member for Finance and Housing highlighted the facts relating to the national effects of Covid 19 and the costs of coping with the crisis.

Councillor Kaiser advised that with regard to Wokingham the number of residents supported had risen from 1,800 to nearly 5,000 people at its peak. In addition £39.4m had been paid out in Government grants and rate relief to businesses large and small and the Council was now faced with an expected overspend of £19m; which would be supported by around £15m worth of grants received from the Government, NHS and other income.

Councillor Kaiser reiterated that although the Council was currently planning for recovery nobody had any idea what normal would look like or cost. With spikes turning up around the UK and Europe and the third world just beginning to count the cost in lives and resources he believed that the Country was still in the early stages of this world wide pandemic.

With regard to the Shareholders' Report Councillor Kaiser confirmed that the companies were on target for the current financial year.

With regard to WHL there were currently 57 houses under construction. Councillor Kaiser reminded Members that the Council had an ambitious target to build 1,000 houses over four years; a mixture of homes which would produce an overall return of 5%. To achieve this it had been agreed to move to a more efficient one team approach between the Council and the housing companies. This was being achieved by the development function of the housing companies being brought back in-house and this was proving to be successful.

Councillor Kaiser highlighted the anticipated budget shortfall for WHL but confirmed that even taking this shortfall into account it was expected that a full year profit of about £400,000 would be achieved from the housing companies overall. This profit would be included in the General Fund Account.

RESOLVED: That the budget monitoring position for the financial year up to 30 June 2020 (Quarter 1) be noted.

7. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FY2020/21 - QUARTER 1

The Executive considered a report setting out the Revenue budget monitoring position at the end of quarter 1 of the current financial year.

The Executive Member for Finance and Housing went through the report and drew Members' attention to the Council's strong financial standing at the start of the pandemic, as set out in the executive summary section. This included healthy non-general reserves that were earmarked for specific expenditure and risks that the Council may face.

Councillor Jorgensen advised the meeting that she had sent the Executive Member for Environment a large number of questions from residents related to the details of the hessian sack scheme and asked Councillor Batth if he would be happy to answer those questions as part of the "Q and A" on the scheme? Councillor Batth confirmed that he would be happy to respond to those questions.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Council's strong financial standing leading up to the COVID-19 crisis as illustrated in the Executive Summary, as set out in the report, be noted;
- 2) the significant financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis as illustrated in the Executive Summary be noted;
- 3) the overall forecast of the current position of the General Fund revenue budget, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), illustrated in the Executive Summary and appendices attached to the report, be noted;
- 4) the ongoing work to manage the budget and ensure the financial viability of the Council, as set out in the Executive Summary, be noted;
- 5) the revenue implications of capital borrowing for £288k for the purchase of hessian sacks, which will have the effect of increasing recycling levels and generating a beneficial financial impact far in excess of the cost of borrowing, be approved.

8. CAPITAL MONITORING 2020/21 - END OF JUNE 2020

The Executive considered a report setting out the progress of the Council's Capital Programme as at 30 June 2020.

During his introduction the Executive Member for Finance and Housing advised that the "hessian" sacks, as mentioned in the Revenue Monitoring report, were being purchased via the Capital Budget.

Due to the uncertainty going forward Councillor Kaiser highlighted the changes to a number of projects which had been re-phased, as shown in Appendix B to the report, amounting to £105m. It was noted that these projects were not being cancelled at this stage but were basically being deferred.

With regard to the recyclability of the "hessian" sacks Councillor Jorgensen stated that she believed that polypropylene was recyclable. In addition Councillor Kaiser believed that the

rubber weights utilised in the sacks were also 100% recyclable and that parts of the bags were actually made from material that had been previously recycled.

Councillor Kaiser also highlighted the additional £600k funding for the development of Dinton Pastures Activity Centre.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) it be noted that the Council's Capital Programme will continue to be reviewed throughout the year in the context of the impact of Covid-19 on funding sources and service requirements, and that any changes will be presented to Executive for approval;
- 2) the proposed rephrasing to parts of the Capital Programme following the 'in-year' review including the impact of Covid-19, as set out in Appendix B, be approved;
- 3) £600k additional budget funded by borrowing for the Dinton Pastures Activity Centre (DAC), for changes necessitated as an outcome of public consultations and planning requirements be approved. The cost of borrowing estimated at £27k p.a. will be covered from expected additional incomes generated by the new activity centre, as set out in paragraph 6 of the Executive Summary of the report;
- 4) a reduction of the Schools Devolved Formula grant budget in the capital programme to £302k, due to the Council receiving £87k less than originally budgeted, as set out in paragraph 7 of the Executive Summary, be noted;
- 5) borrowing of £288k for the purchase of hessian sacks which will have the effect of increasing recycling levels and generating a beneficial financial impact far in excess of the cost of borrowing, as set out in paragraph 8 of the Executive Summary, be approved;
- 6) it be noted that consultants will be engaged within existing budgets to review the noise levels and options with regards to recent major resurfacing works, as set out in paragraph 9 of the Executive Summary;
- 7) the quarter one position for the capital budgets, as set out in Appendix A to the report as summarised in the Executive Summary, be noted.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2019-20

The Executive considered a report relating to the Treasury Management Outturn for 2019-20.

The Executive Member for Finance and Housing advised the meeting that the report demonstrated how the treasury management function had effectively managed the Council's debt and cash balances to support the funding of the delivery of the Council's key priorities. It was noted that the report had been considered by the Audit Committee and would be reported to Council.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the report be recommended to Council;

- 2) it be noted that the report was presented to Audit Committee on 29th July 2020;
- 3) the managed repayment of debt over time which illustrates the increased borrowing required to fund key Council priorities, which in turn generate income streams (to repay debt) and provides revenue funding for vital statutory services (as set out in the graph in table 2 of the report), be noted;
- 4) the asset value created through the Council's capital investments compared to the debt required to generate the asset value (as set out in the graph in table 2 of the report) be noted;
- 5) the capital investments made in the Council's priorities for its community, by category (as set out in table 1 of the report) be noted;
- 6) the Treasury Management report in Appendix A, that shows that all approved indicators have been adhered to and that prudent and safe management has been adhered to, be noted.

10. WOKINGHAM OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN SUMMARY

The Executive considered a report relating to the Wokingham Outbreak Control Plan which was produced jointly with Public Health England and other partners.

The Leader of Council informed the meeting that the implementation of the Plan would take place within a recently formed Local Outbreak Engagement Board; which was a sub-committee of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the scale of preparation in a short timescale to develop an outbreak control plan jointly with Public Health England and other partners be noted;
- 2) the impact of the Plan for the public be noted.

11. CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN: DUTY TO COOPERATE

The Executive considered a report relating to the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan and specifically the Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) which provide a record of engagement, clarify areas of agreement and where necessary areas of disagreement.

During his introduction the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement highlighted that the Minerals and Waste Plan had been considered over a number of years and had been consulted on widely. The Plan was a great example of listening to residents' views as a number of the sites that had originally been put forward when reviewed were not found to be suitable and therefore were not included in the Plan.

Councillor Smith highlighted that the reason the Statements of Common Ground were required was because of the Council's reliance on neighbouring authorities for the purchase of raw materials for building roads, networks, etc.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the following Statements of Common Ground, as part of on-going Duty to Cooperate requirements, be approved:
 - i. South East Waste Planning Advisory Group (SEWPAG) Statement of Common Ground concerning Strategic Policies for Waste Management (see Appendix A).
 - ii. Statement of Common Ground between the Central and Eastern Berkshire Authorities and Buckinghamshire Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Hampshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Surrey County Council, South Downs National Park Authority, West Berkshire Council and Wiltshire Council concerning Soft Sand Supply (see Appendix B).
 - iii. Statement of Common Ground between the Central and Eastern Berkshire Authorities, and Buckinghamshire Council, Hampshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Surrey County Council, West Berkshire Council and Wiltshire Council, concerning Sharp Sand and Gravel Supply (see Appendix C).
 - iv. Statement of Common Ground between Central and East Berkshire Authorities and the South London Waste Plan Boroughs concerning Strategic Policies for Waste (see Appendix D).
 - v. Statement of Common Ground between Westminster City Council, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham concerning strategic waste matters (see Appendix E).
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Director of Place and Growth, in consultation with the Executive Member responsible for Strategic Planning, to enter into future Statements of Common Ground;
- 3) any minor changes to the Statements of Common Ground be delegated to the Director of Place and Growth, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement.

12. CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN: PROPOSED SUBMISSION PLAN

The Executive considered a report relating to the proposal to publish and consult on the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan.

The Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement reiterated that the Plan had been widely consulted over a number of years. It was not expected that the Plan would be contentious as all the mineral and waste sites had been removed and the Council would be relying on neighbouring authorities.

RESOLVED that the following be recommended to the Special Council Executive Committee:

- 1) approve the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Proposed Submission Plan and supporting documentation for publication and public consultation under Regulation 19;

- 2) authorise community engagement on the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Proposed Submission Plan and associated supporting documents to take place for 6 weeks from Thursday 3rd September 2020;
- 3) authorise the submission of the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Proposed Submission Plan, and supporting documents to the Secretary of State for independent examination in public, under Regulation 22;
- 4) authorise the Director of Place and Growth, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Enforcement, to agree minor amendments necessary to the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan: Proposed Submission Plan and other supporting documents prior to consultation. Any minor modifications would consist of non-material amendments such as rewording and correction of typing errors;
- 5) request the appointed Inspector to recommend modifications to the submitted Joint Plan, in the event that the Inspector considers that such modifications would make the plan sound.

13. CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN – DINTON ACTIVITY CENTRE (DAC) PROJECT

The Executive considered a report providing an update on capital projects relating to a replacement provision at Dinton Activity Centre and the expansion of Addington School both of which would assist with the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The Executive Member for Resident Services, Communications and Emissions informed the meeting that an additional capital budget of £483,900 was being requested to finance the two climate emergency projects. The first related to the use of environmentally friendly technology eg air source heat pumps, alterations to the domestic hot water systems, solar panels both on the roof and in the car park, etc. to reduce the energy usage of Dinton Activity Centre. This project would reduce and offset carbon at the facility which would lead to it becoming energy positive i.e. it would generate 126% more energy than it uses and would take 30% more carbon from the environment than it produces. Councillor Murray stated that the intention was to roll this out to other Council assets in the coming months.

Councillor Murray informed the meeting that the second project related to the addition of solar panels to the Addington School new build. Unfortunately the design process had been too advanced, and build deadlines too close, to add additional climate infrastructure at that phase. The project would, however, still cut carbon emissions by 49.7% and improve energy efficiency versus the original plan by 46%.

Councillor Murray reiterated that the motion, supported by Council last year, did agree that the Council would play as active a role as possible in fighting climate change with the objective of reaching carbon neutrality by 2030 if possible. The Council was, of course, reliant on other bodies eg Highways England, Southwest Trains and Reading Buses, as well as Central Government and the energy companies, to play their part in achieving carbon neutrality.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the proposals and the anticipated outcomes, as set out in the report, be noted;
- 2) the decision to invest in the carbon neutrality proposals in Dinton Activity Centre and Addington School to significantly reduce the carbon emission of the new buildings in line with the Council's net zero carbon by 2030 target, be confirmed;
- 3) an additional capital budget of £483,900 financed by borrowing and fully repaid from savings generated through reduced energy costs be approved;
- 4) it be noted that the annual financial cost reductions in excess of the capital financing costs will be set aside to provide for component replacement in future years.

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MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 AUGUST 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.18 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Simon Weeks (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice-Chairman), Stephen Conway, Carl Doran, Pauline Jorgensen, Abdul Loyes, Andrew Mickleburgh, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross and Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations, Planning Delivery
Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager
Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor
Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management
Callum Wernham, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist

Case Officers Present

Nick Chancellor
Stefan Fludger
Senjuti Manna
Graham Vaughan

11. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Gary Cowan.

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

MEMBERS' UPDATE

There are a number of references to the Members' Update within these minutes. The Members' Update was circulated to all present at the meeting, and published on the WBC website. A copy is attached.

13. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14. APPLICATIONS TO BE DEFERRED AND WITHDRAWN ITEMS

There were no applications recommended for deferral, or withdrawn.

15. APPLICATION NO.201149 - LAND EAST OF OAK AVENUE SOUTH OF SADLER CRESCENT AND NORTH OF A329 LONDON ROAD RG40 1LH

Proposal: Full planning application for a park and ride facility comprising access, car and motorcycle parking spaces, bicycle storage, bus stops, landscaping, drainage and ancillary development.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 23 to 58.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Various corrections to references of neighbouring property addresses;
- Confirmation that that assessment of impact on residential amenity was undertaken in relation to the above mentioned properties;
- An annotated version of the site plan was circulated to Members for their consideration.

In line with the given deadlines, one public written submission was received for this item. This submission was circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submission as provided can be found below.

WSP provided the following statement in support of the application on behalf of the applicant:

- 1 “The Scheme is part of a local commitment to relieve congestion along key road corridors and is supported by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) and Bracknell Forest Council (BFC) in their work to deliver cross-boundary solutions to local transport network issues. The proposed Site was previously identified as part of the Keephatch Beech development, and has been designated as a Park and Ride (P&R) facility within WBC’s Core Strategy (2010), reinforcing the case that a P&R Scheme at this location forms part of a long-established preference for the Council’s transport solutions for reducing congestion and improving connectivity to Wokingham and Bracknell.
- 2 The Scheme would complement other A329 strategic corridor improvement schemes promoted by both WBC and BFC in contributing to mitigate the impact arising from new developments. The Scheme will provide 254 car parking spaces and provide an alternative travel choice along the A329 corridor. The Scheme aligns with the Council’s ambitions as the Site is allocated in WBC’s Local Transport Plan (Strategy 2011 – 2026).
- 3 The desired outcome of the Scheme is to improve accessibility through public transport by providing an alternative method of transport into Wokingham and Bracknell town centres, which would encourage more people to switch from using the private car to a more sustainable transport mode. By removing car trips, the Scheme would result in improved journey times to Wokingham and Bracknell town centres, especially at peak times which would have beneficial effects on reducing congestion and therefore driver stress, whilst facilitating air quality improvements and noise reduction. Overall, the Scheme will ensure public transport is more inclusive by ensuring good quality bus services to and from key destinations in the area.
- 4 The car park design include spaces and charging points for electric vehicles which will help reduce the emissions that contribute to climate change. In 2019 WBC declared a “climate emergency”, the Scheme contributes to the steps WBC is taking to reduce adverse environmental impacts and improve public health in the area, and to make WBC carbon neutral by 2030.

- 5 The Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) submitted with the planning application provides an overview of the Scheme; sets out the need for the Scheme; assessed the material considerations, and examined how any residual adverse effects will be mitigated. The PDAS has assessed the Scheme against relevant planning policy and material consideration.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Malcolm Richards commented that as a Ward Member for this area, he had been aware for some time of the proposed development. Malcolm added that should this land not be developed into a park and ride, the land would revert to the developer. Malcolm was of the opinion that this was a good location for a park and ride facility, with frequent existing buses passing by the site. Malcolm sought clarification regarding the hours which lighting would be operational on the site, and queried whether a vending machine could be located on site. Nick Chancellor, case officer, stated that there was currently no detailed proposals for lighting hours, however there was a proposed condition to control lighting hours. Nick added that later in the process, when more was known about how the site would be managed, more detail would be available regarding lighting. Nick stated that there were no details regarding a vending unit, however there was scope for small outbuildings such as a toilet block.

Stephen Conway stated that he had some reservations regarding this application, including whether this was the right location for a park and ride in the North Wokingham SDL. However, Stephen stated that the Committee had to look at the application in front of them. Stephen stated his hope that adequate protections including landscaping would be provided to protect local residents.

Carl Doran queried which buses would serve the proposed park and ride, whether a bus lane was planned on the A329, and what would be the charging structure for use of the park and ride. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the existing 4 and X4 services ran past the proposed site, at an approximate frequency of 4 services per hour. Judy added that a bus lane was not currently planned on the A329, and the fee charging structure had yet to be finalised. Carl added that the business case for this application relied on economic sustainability under the NPPF, which in his opinion would not be achieved by the proposals as there was to be no dedicated bus service, and the overall proposals would not be an attractive proposition for potential users. Judy Kelly stated that there was a sum of S106 money set aside for public transport provision within the North Wokingham SDL. Connor Corrigan, Service Manager – Strategic Development Locations and Planning Delivery, stated that the proposal would serve both Wokingham and Bracknell, and possibly Twyford in the future. Connor added that this scheme was funded by the LEP, and there was potential for a dedicated bus lane and dedicated bus service in the future.

Pauline Jorgensen commented that there were proposals to protect the nearby ancient woodland and residential accommodation with landscaping. Pauline added that there was no local train station at the proposed site as there was at the Winnersh park and ride, and therefore people would be more likely to catch the bus into Reading. Pauline commented that the land was being handed over to WBC, the business case had been approved by the LEP, and the LEP were funding the scheme.

Abdul Loyes queried whether there had been any significant changes to the application since its conception in 2015. Nick Chancellor stated that the proposals in front of Members was what was expected from the outline application and reserved matters.

Andrew Mickleburgh sought assurances that the impact of the proposals on both existing and future housing had been given substantial weight, queried whether the screening matrix process had caused any harm to neighbouring properties, and asked whether the business case was material consideration, and what 'finer details' could be amended should the application be approved. Nick Chancellor stated that the screening process had been carried out prior to the application, and the conclusion was that it did not cause significant harm to either existing or future neighbouring properties. Nick stated that minor details were commonly looked at by officers after approval, and if any aspects were deemed unacceptable then professional officers would reassess these specific aspects.

Simon Weeks sought clarification that the Committee needed to assess this application based on material planning considerations. Mary Severin, Borough Solicitor, confirmed this to be correct.

Angus Ross queried whether the land would remain as WBC land after handover should the park and ride fail, whether the CCTV was live monitored or recorded, and whether the hours of operation had been finalised. Nick Chancellor stated that the S106 was conditioned only for a park and ride, therefore should the park and ride fail the land would go back to the developer. Nick added that he was not aware of any detail regarding the CCTV, however this would be covered by condition. The provisional hours of operation were 7am-7pm, however the parking management scheme would allow more nuance and control.

A number of Members raised concerns with the provisional hours of operation were insufficient for a site to be used as a park and ride. By contrast, a number of Members were concerned that this was not a planning consideration. It was proposed by Angus Ross, and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that hours of operation be conditioned between 6.30am and 11pm. Upon being put the vote this proposal was lost.

It was proposed that hours of operation and hours of lighting operation be agreed in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee and the Ward Members. This was unanimously agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED That application number 201149 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 24 to 32, with the hours of operation and hours of lighting operation to be agreed in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee and the Ward Members as resolved by the Committee.

16. APPLICATION NO.200378 - DINTON ACTIVITY CENTRE, SANDFORD LANE, HURST, RG10 0SU

Proposal: Full application for the erection of an activity centre, with activity hall, changing facilities, classroom facility, ancillary offices and café, landscaping and parking following demolition of the existing Dinton Activity Centre.

Applicant: Wokingham Borough Council (WBC)

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 59 to 106.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amended condition 2, to now include the relevant drawing numbers;
- Amended condition 14;
- Replacement of informative 3, and new informative 4;
- Amended condition 19;
- Removal of paragraph 60 of the officer report;
- Correction that the floor space is 622 square meters, however an employment skills plan was still triggered as the site was over 1 hectare and this application was therefore a major application;
- Confirmation that the proposals would create 3 additional permanent jobs, and other more variable seasonal jobs during the summer months.

In line with the given deadlines, one public written submission was received for this item. This submission was circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submission as provided can be found below.

The following statement in support of the application was provided on behalf of the applicant:

“The proposals presented here this evening are to replace and expand existing important community uses that are offered on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council. The existing Dinton Activity Centre has seen better days and the proposals presented here are to provide modern, high-quality and sustainable buildings, to allow the Council to continue offering a range of outdoor activities, along with important Council run courses.

The improved facilities, whilst not expanding the day-to-day offering of the centre during the peak season, will allow the centre to operate through a larger portion of the year, providing important facilities to children and adults. This is largely thanks to the proposed new activity hall and improved indoor classroom area that can be opened up to provide additional lecture theatre style space.

The proposals are a result of extensive pre-application discussions with the Council's officers, presentations to members of the public and careful review of potential impacts that the proposed development may have on the locality. It is considered that the resultant

development has been carefully considered and will improve the offer at the site, whilst having no impact on neighbouring properties.

Whilst not a specific requirement of this proposal, due to its scale, a number of sustainable technologies will be utilised in the building to ensure it reduces its energy consumption needs and lowers its CO2 output.

Members, the scheme presented here this evening has been carefully considered, accords with relevant planning policy and provides a valuable and much needed contribution to local community services provided by the Council. As such, the Council's Officer has recommended approval of the application and I request members support the positive recommendation and approve this application."

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that the buildings at the existing activity centre were tired in appearance, and this application was an opportunity to improve the existing offering.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried what would happen to the existing tenants during the construction phase. Stefan Fludger, case officer, stated that it was up to WBC as to who would use the buildings, however it was conditioned to allow for the retention of the existing buildings during the construction phase to allow existing activities to continue. Rachelle queried whether there were any other sustainable transport routes planned to access the site. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the proposed travel plan would look at sustainable travel to and from the site, including cycle storage.

Angus Ross sought clarification that the elevated walkway to the Emmbrook had in fact been removed from the scheme. Stefan Fludger confirmed this to be correct, and added that reference to the elevated walkway in paragraph 43 of the officer report was incorrect.

Malcolm Richards queried whether sprinklers would be installed in the training room, as it had an educational function. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that sprinklers were covered under building regulations and were not a material planning consideration.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried why the proposal was not aiming for excellent or outstanding on the BREEAM standard for sustainable developments. Justin Turvey stated that there were no requirements for an excellent or outstanding BREEAM rating, and going above the recommended 'very good' rating required a policy justification. Justin added that an excellent rating added an additional significant cost to the development.

Pauline Jorgensen queried whether consideration had been given to restricting the regular hire of the hall for events such as music. Stefan Fludger stated that the nearest dwelling was approximately 42 metres away, and the proposal was for an activity centre with other ancillary uses which came with restrictions.

A number of Members sought clarification as to whether photovoltaic panels would be present on the proposed building. Stefan Fludger confirmed this to be correct.

RESOLVED That application number 200378 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 60 to 68, amended conditions 2, 4 and 19 as set

out in the Members' Update, replacement of informative 3 and addition of informative 4 as set out in the Members' Update.

17. APPLICATION NO.200951 - SONNING GOLF CLUB, DUFFIELD ROAD, WOODLEY, RG4 6GJ

Proposal: Application for the approval of reserved matters pursuant to outline planning consent 161529 (APP/X0360/W/17/3167142) for the erection of 13 dwellings with associated highway works, public open space and landscaping. Details of Layout, Appearance, Landscaping and Scale to be determined.

Applicant: Mr Chris Rees, Alfred Homes

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 107 to 164.

The Committee were advised that the Members' Update included:

- Amendment to recommendation A;
- Updated to condition 2 to include the approved plans.

In line with the given deadlines, four public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submissions as provided can be found below.

Sonning Parish Council provided the following submission in objection to the application:

"Sonning is a Limited Development Location with limited access to shopping facilities and opportunities to access facilities within acceptable walking distance. Occupiers would rely heavily on cars. Properties immediately to the left of the site are low, 1 ½ to 2 storey, individually designed dwellings, contributing to the area's rural character. The plot, together with the Golf Club is in the countryside, where inappropriate development is considered 'harmful' and acts as a green buffer between Sonning and Woodley.

The outline plans (161529), allowed at appeal, included an illustrative view of the proposed development, showing modest detached 1 ½ storey dwellings, some detached, some semi-detached and a terrace of three.

The proposed dwellings are large 2 ½ storey dwellings of some height, that will tower over neighbouring dwellings and aimed at larger families than previously indicated. The 8 '5' bedroom, detached dwellings all have 'bonus' rooms on the second floor and must be considered as 6-bedroomed. Therefore, is sufficient parking provided?

These changes will have a greater impact on the area than previously suggested at Appeal and represents overdevelopment of the site and are out of keeping with the area due to their height, bulk and size.

The Appeal Inspector said of 161529 '***it is likely that the layout would be of an increased density and less spacious than the majority of surrounding development. The residential development would also diminish the existing value of green open space when viewed from adjacent residential properties***' This assessment was based on the illustrative view provided with the application. The impact will be so much greater if the proposed much larger dwellings are approved.

The Inspector also said: '***The proposal would be contrary to the countryside protection, environmental quality and landscape protection aims of policies CP1, CP3, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy and policies CC02 and TB21 of the Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 (MDD)***'.

In December 2019, Sonning Parish Council carried out a speed survey along that stretch of Pound Lane with support from WBC Highway Officers, in December 2019. A daily vehicle count of almost 7000 a day southbound towards the proposed entrance/exit, which equates to 14000 vehicles per day. Speeds of 65 mph and 60 mph, were recorded, indicating how dangerous the proposed exit would be, which is close to the scene of a recent fatal accident."

Paul Etherington, resident, provided the following submission in objection to the application:

"The planning reasons highlighted in my, and many others' previous submissions in relation to this site/development remain, but the Planning Inspectorate regrettably elected to ignore them for reason of land supply which remains contested.

I would highlight that since the previous substantive application, Pound Lane, that many objectors highlighted as a dangerous stretch of road, has tragically seen a fatal accident. We highlighted:

- speeding
- flooding
- that the proposed access point is on a bend
- dangerously close to the points at which Mustard Lane, Duffield Road & West Drive join Pound Lane

Had the applicant chosen to provide site access through the golf club car park (ringed on their plan) perhaps at the indicated point into the car park it would be considerably less dangerous than the position proposed.

It would also avoid the developer cutting through the tree line/verge which are owned by Wokingham Borough and covered by Tree Preservation Order TPO 1505/2015.

Notwithstanding that one mature TPO'd oak tree was mysteriously felled over a Bank Holiday weekend, it is sprouting well from what was left and there are still a number of trees and an attractive hedgerow making up the street scene (which officers previously highlighted as valuable)."

Chris Rees, applicant, provided the following submission in support of the application:

"1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of the consideration of the Reserved Matters Application on land at Sonning Golf Club, pursuant to the Outline Planning Approval granted for the erection of 13 dwellings on land adjacent to the Golf Club, at which point the principle and the vehicular access for thirteen dwellings was approved.

1.2 The Reserved Matters application has been the subject of a pre-application submission with the Borough Council and has therefore been shaped by the advice received from Officers concerning the siting, scale, landscaping and appearance of the houses in line with best practice advocated by the Council.

1.3 As per the Outline Approval, the proposal consists of eight open market properties and five affordable housing properties, set around a central landscaped green. The houses are tenure blind and adopt a classical approach to their architecture and built form.

1.4 The proposal has been supported by a detailed landscape and planting plan, the focus of which is the shared green space within the centre of the development to which the residents have access and can enjoy.

1.5 The application has been the subject of full due diligence with account taken of the distances and orientation to the adjacent residential dwelling to the north and the long-term preservation of the trees on site subject to the tree preservation order.

1.6 Moreover, the proposal has been shaped and formed with Officers, with no objections from any statutory consultee and with a resulting architectural approach that will add to the character of the area and deliver an array of housing types and tenure.

1.7 With the principal of residential development and the access already established, we would respectfully ask that the outstanding Reserved Matters for the 13 new homes before the Committee today are approved.”

Michael Firmager, Ward Member, provided the following submission in objection to the application:

“I was aware this application as a major development would come before the Planning Committee if officers were minded to approve the application. However, I listed the application as the local Borough Council Member.

I am against this application for the following reasons:-

- 1) It is out of character with the area. Also, it is overbearing and with restricted room for development;
- 2) It is inconsistent with the conditions set out by the Appeal Inspector, especially with the increase in the height of the buildings, which is of detriment to the character to the village;
- 3) The access will be onto Pound Lane causes me great concern, which is extremely dangerous being on a bend. Pound Lane itself can be either a fast road or one with traffic jams depending upon the amount of traffic on the A4 going into Reading or onto the A329(M). This development will only add more traffic to an already over loaded road network.

I hope this committee will take on my comments mentioned here and before, together with those of Sonning Parish Council and the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society and refuse this application.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Simon Weeks commented that an Inspector had approved a previous application for this site at appeal, which approved access to the site. Simon queried whether the Inspector would have been aware that a TPO tree would be required to be removed at the site. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that an inevitable result of the Inspector’s decision to approve the grant of planning permission was that TPO trees would have to be removed. Simon queried how many new trees would be planted on

the site. Senjuti Manna, case officer, stated that 25 new trees and 16 large shrubs would be planted as part of this application.

Chris Bowring commented that although the outline application had approved the access to the site, the layout of that proposal was also a material consideration. Chris added that the Inspector had commented that the 13 new houses would help to provide for the housing shortfall in the area.

Stephen Conway commented that the Committee were constrained by the Inspectors previous decision regarding this site. Stephen added that there was an unfortunate relationship between the garages of plots 2 & 3 and neighbouring property no.101a, however this was unlikely to constitute a reason for refusal.

Carl Doran queried whether the junction improvement had been carried out, and whether the affordable housing units were of a similar scale and kind as the other housing units. Judy Kelly, Highways Development Manager, stated that the technical approval for the junction improvement was going through at the moment, and the improvements should be carried out shortly after approval. Justin Turvey stated that the affordable housing units were the same as the other housing units in a planning sense, as they met the relevant planning tests. Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC's) affordable housing team had specified their preferred mix of affordable units for this site, based on local need.

Pauline Jorgensen queried what the bonus rooms could be used for. Justin Turvey stated that a bonus room was a type of terminology used by developers, and that in essence the room could be used by the eventual buyer for any desired usage within reason.

Abdul Loyes queried why plot 13 had a 10m rear amenity distance, compared to the 11m rear amenity distance that plots 10 through 12 for example. Senjuti Manna stated that although the Borough Design Guide suggested an 11m rear amenity distance, the TPO trees to the rear of plot 13 constrained the length of the garden. However, plot 13 was wider than plots 10 through 12, and therefore had a larger rear garden area overall and was therefore deemed acceptable.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried how the density of the site compared to the outline application, asked why the application before the Committee included two and a half storey buildings compared to one and a half storey buildings considered at appeal, and queried whether the impact on local services such as GP surgeries and schools as a result of the additional housing was a material consideration. Simon Weeks confirmed that any development of any size added additional strain for local services, and S106 or CIL contributions funded local amenity provision. Senjuti Manna stated that the density of 16.25 habitable rooms per hectare was the same as proposed at the allowed appeal. Senjuti added that plans which the Inspector considered had buildings up to 10.2m in height which was equivalent to two and a half storeys, therefore there was no significant difference. Senjuti added that the site now had an additional 300m² plot coverage compared to the plot considered by the Inspector.

Malcolm Richards queried how the 13 unallocated parking spaces would be managed. Senjuti Manna stated that condition 8 included a car parking management plan, which would also cover unallocated parking spaces on the site.

Angus Ross asked for confirmation as to how the required number of parking spaces was calculated. Judy Kelly confirmed that this calculation was based on a formula which was

inputted into a spreadsheet based on the number of habitable rooms on site. Judy added that a garage was classed as half of a parking space.

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey queried whether photovoltaic panels were being implemented at the proposed development. Justin Turvey stated that there was no indication that photovoltaic panels were planned for the site, and this was not a planning matter. Simon Weeks added that until this issue was backed up by local and national planning policy WBC could not insist on an applicant installing photovoltaic panels at a development.

Simon Weeks proposed that an informative be added, stating that WBC was keen to be an early adopter for new developments within the Borough to install technology to minimise carbon output, and the Committee wished to encourage the applicant to incorporate appropriate technologies at this development to meet WBC's goal. This was unanimously agreed by the Committee, and added to the list of informatives as contained in the officer report.

RESOLVED That application number 200951 be approved, subject to conditions and informatives as set out in agenda pages 108 to 112, amendment to Recommendation A an updated condition 2 as set out in the Members' Update, and additional informative asking the applicant to consider installing technologies to minimise the carbon output of the dwellings, as resolved by the Committee.

18. APPLICATION NO.201143 - LAND ADJACENT TO 166 NINE MILE RIDE, FINCHAMPSTEAD

Simon Weeks took no part in the discussion or voting for this item.

Chris Bowring assumed the Chair for the duration of this item.

Proposal: Full planning application for the proposed addition of four pitches to an existing four pitch caravan park for gypsy and travellers, plus reconfiguration of existing site.

Applicant: Mr D Reed

The Committee received and reviewed a report, set out in agenda pages 165 to 188.

The Committee were advised that there were no Members' Updates.

In line with the given deadlines, three public written submissions were received for this item. These submissions were circulated to Members in advance, and noted on the evening. The submissions as provided can be found below.

Gordon Veitch, Finchamstead Parish Council, provided the following submission in objection to the application:

"We object to this inappropriate overdevelopment of the site. The proposed development would cause issues with privacy for residents of The Dittons due to the close proximity of the static/mobile homes.

We believe WBC currently has adequate provisions for gypsy and traveller pitches. We understand the existing plans appear inaccurate, the layout of existing pitches is incorrect and do not represent the current layout of the site.

If WBC is minded to approve this application we ask that conditions are added to any approval:

- Siting of mobile homes to be an acceptable distance from adjoining properties.
- Landscaping to offer satisfactory visual protection to existing properties.
- Light pollution, any street lights to be positioned and directed within the site."

Emily Temple, agent, provided the following submission in support of the application:

"We are pleased to bring forward this site allocated in the draft local plan update, for prospective development. As Councillors may know, the land at number 166 has been home to an existing gypsy and traveller site since 2008 when two pitches were approved, with expansion to 4 pitches following planning approval in 2014.

The site is located immediately adjacent to the Modest Development Location of Finchampstead. The site is operated by the occupants and owner of 166 Nine Mile Ride; being so close they are able to keep a watchful eye over the running of the site. The development would also use the existing access and hardstanding so there would be no apparent visual change when viewed from the road.

The current council need for pitches is identified as 5.5 pitches. Whilst some permissions have been granted they have not yet been implemented. Being an extension of an existing site, the land at number 166 is both suitable for development, available and deliverable immediately. This meets an ongoing need for household expansion as existing Gypsy Traveller children in the area grow up and form their own independent households. A larger site such as proposed is well below the 15 pitch maximum set in Government advice, whilst still accommodating larger single family groups.

I am pleased to note there is no objection from statutory consultees such as Highways and Environmental Health. I can confirm a written response was sent to a Planning Contravention Notice issued to the applicant during the course of the application. The site is being operated fully in accordance with the existing permission for 4 pitches, and the applicant is committed to complying with the conditional requirements indicated by officers, such as landscaping, and a legal agreement to secure SPA mitigation.

I hope that you are reassured by my comments today. We trust that we have worked well with officers throughout the application process to date, responding to queries as requested. It's therefore respectfully requested that your officer's recommendation be supported today. Thank you."

Simon Weeks, Ward Member, provided the following submission in objection to the application:

"Residents have expressed significant concern about this proposal to double the number of pitches on this site within a residential area. 4 pitches were allowed on appeal in 2009.

The site is constrained as follows:

- a TPO applies to the site;
- 12 established residential houses share a boundary with this site;
- the site is designated as Countryside;

- WBC currently has a 9.09 years land supply for gypsy and traveller pitches;
- the application conflicts with a CP11.

Despite the TPO, a number of trees on the site have been lost but as you will see at paragraph 31, it is noted trees *are shown illustratively*. We should adopt a precautionary approach and secure an Arboricultural Assessment first, to ensure no further harm to the remaining protected trees.

Looking at the proposed site layout, you will see that 3 of the new proposed pitches (numbers 5, 6 and 7) are positioned right on the boundary and will impact on the amenity of numbers 8 and 9 The Dittons. I have received repeated complaints over the last few years about burning of plastic waste and noise, so the positioning of additional pitches so close to the boundary is inappropriate and likely to exacerbate this problem.

It is possible the site could be re-configured to minimise the potential impact on neighbours. Additionally an appropriate survey of the TPO is required to support this application, so I cannot support this application and would urge the Committee to refuse it in its current form.”

Members were asked in turn for any comments or queries on this application. Specific comments or queries are summarised below.

Pauline Jorgensen queried how Members could assess the relation of the proposals to the properties at The Dittons if the pitch positions were only indicative. Justin Turvey, Operational Manager – Development Management, stated that it could be conditioned that additional landscaping be provided for screenage, or that pitches not be situated in a certain area of the site.

Malcolm Richards queried whether the proposed layout of the pitches was deemed as acceptable to officers. Graham Vaughan, case officer, stated that the proposed layout was acceptable to officers, and demonstrable harm needed to be shown in order for an application to be refused.

Andrew Mickleburgh queried whether the site could accommodate an additional four caravan pitches whilst maintaining residential amenity, queried whether there were any large trees due to be cut down, asked whether there was any additional planting planned for the outer site to screen neighbouring properties, and queried whether there was sufficient room on site for non-caravan parking. Graham Vaughan stated that officers were satisfied that the site could accommodate a total of eight caravan pitches without sacrificing residential amenity. Graham stated that if the site damaged any root protection areas of nearby trees, the siting of the caravans could be altered. Graham stated that condition 3 required an approved landscaping scheme to be submitted to the Council prior to development. Judy Kelly stated that there was no specific parking standards for gypsy and traveller sites, however there was sufficient room for parking of vehicles on site.

A number of Members were concerned about the separation distances between the proposed and existing pitches. Justin Turvey stated that the nearby Dittons residential properties were terraced, and a clear reason needed to be given as to why those dwellings could be terraced but caravans could not be grouped together.

Stephen Conway commented that the proposals were in contrary to CP11, however there were special rulings for gypsy and traveller sites. Justin Turvey stated that officers had

accepted that the proposals were contrary to CP11, however TB10 of the MDD anticipated this conflict and therefore officers had deemed the proposals as acceptable.

Angus Ross proposed that the application be deferred in order for a site visit, or virtual replacement, to be undertaken to assess whether the proposals conformed to separation distance guidelines as set out in the Borough Design Guide, and to assess whether the proposed layout of pitches was practically workable whilst not causing harm to nearby residential dwellings. This proposal was seconded by Chris Bowring and put to the vote.

RESOLVED That application number 201143 be deferred, to allow a site visit or virtual replacement to be undertaken to assess whether the proposals conformed to separation distance guidelines as set out in the Borough Design Guide, and to assess whether the proposed layout of pitches was practically workable whilst not causing harm to nearby residential dwellings.

Simon Weeks resumed the Chair.

Decision made in the presence of:
Robert Curtis, Senior Specialist - Transport
Madeleine Shopland, Democrat & Electoral Services Specialist

<p align="center">INDIVIDUAL EXECUTIVE MEMBER DECISION RECORD SHEET IMD 2020/10</p>
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Title of the report	WBC Response to Reading's Local Transport Plan Consultation
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DECISION MADE BY Executive Member for Highways and Transport - Pauline Jorgensen
ACTION BY Director, Place and Growth - Chris Traill
DECISION MADE ON 20 August 2020

Recommendation contained in the report

That the Executive Member for Highways and Transport approves the proposed response as set out in Appendix 2.

Decision

That the Executive Member for Highways and Transport approved the proposed response as set out in Appendix 2.

Reasons for Decision if different to recommendation

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected at time of the decision

N/A

Summary of consultations undertaken

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES	
Director – Corporate Services	No comment
Monitoring Officer	No comment
Leader of the Council	No comment

Reasons why the report was deemed to have contained confidential or Exempt information (if applicable)

N/A

Any Conflict of interest declared by any Executive Member who is consulted by a Member which relates to the decision

None

Any dispensation granted by the Head of Paid Service in respect of any declared conflict of interest

None

Background papers

The Paper, an Appendix summarising the consultation content and an Appendix proposing our response.

PUBLISHED ON: 21 August 2020

EFFECTIVE ON: 2 September 2020

CALL-IN PERIOD EXPIRES: 1 September 2020

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2020 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.25 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), Alison Swaddle (Vice-Chairman), Jenny Cheng, Paul Fishwick, Jim Frewin, Sarah Kerr, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Andrew Mickleburgh, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Oliver Whittle, Carl Doran and Emma Hobbs

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Parry Batth, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Lindsay Ferris, John Kaiser, Malcolm Richards and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Officers Present

Peter Baveystock, Consultant Specialist, Place Clienting
Richard Bisset, Lead Specialist, Place Clienting
Neil Carr, Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist
Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive
Andy Glencross, Assistant Director, Highways and Transport
Chris Traill, Director, Place and Growth

23. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted by Andy Croy and Guy Grandison.

Carl Doran and Emma Hobbs attended the meeting as substitutes.

24. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25. CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

At the start of the meeting, the Chairman made the following statement about the role of the Committee in considering the Call-In of Executive decisions:

“The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent “critical friend” challenge and to work with the Council’s Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds. That is the approach the Committee will take in considering the Call-In.”

In relation to the specific issue of the replacement of recycling black boxes, the Chairman confirmed that no decision had been taken about the method of replacement.

26. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

26.1 Philip Meadowcroft asked the Chairman the following question:

Will the Chairman please confirm that, notwithstanding the contents of items 27 and 28 on the agenda have been called-in by Opposition councillors, she will ensure that the meeting is conducted at all times on a non-partisan basis to enable an intellectually-honest, open,

transparent, and civilised discussion and outcome on issues which are critical for local democracy?

Answer

Yes, as you have already been assured from my initial statement.

27. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

28. CALL-IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Committee considered the Call-In of decisions taken by the Executive, at its meeting held on 30 July 2020, relating to:

- The proposed re-phasing of parts of the Capital Programme – Appendix B to the Executive report;
- £600k additional budget for the Dinton Pastures Activity Centre;
- £288k of additional borrowing for the purchase of reusable sacks for dry recycling, to improve recycling levels.

The Committee noted that Agenda items 27 and 28 would be considered together. The report at Agenda item 28 provided a detailed response to the third element of the Call-In (reusable sacks for dry recycling).

The report stated that, at its meeting on 30 July 2020, the Executive considered the Capital Monitoring Report for the first quarter of 2020/21 (April-June). The Executive report stated that the Covid-19 pandemic had had an unprecedented impact on the Council's finances, in terms of both its Revenue and Capital resources. It was, therefore, essential that the Capital programme was closely reviewed to assess the assuredness of funding sources and any changes in service requirements. Council Officers had conducted a review of the Capital programme to identify the re-phasing of projects matched to expected delivery.

The Executive report also referred to the purchase of reusable sacks to improve the recycling levels for material such as paper and card. It also considered additional funding to support the development of the Dinton Pastures Activity Centre.

The Executive decisions were that:

- 1) it be noted that the Council's Capital Programme will continue to be reviewed throughout the year in the context of the impact of Covid-19 on funding sources and service requirements, and that any changes will be presented to Executive for approval;
- 2) the proposed re-phasing to parts of the Capital Programme following the 'in-year' review including the impact of Covid-19, as set out in Appendix B, be approved;
- 3) £600k additional budget funded by borrowing for the Dinton Pastures Activity Centre (DAC), for changes necessitated as an outcome of public consultations and planning requirements be approved. The cost of borrowing estimated at £27k per annum will be covered from expected additional incomes generated by the new activity centre, as set out in paragraph 6 of the Executive Summary of the report;

- 4) a reduction of the Schools Devolved Formula grant budget in the capital programme to £302k, due to the Council receiving £87k less than originally budgeted, as set out, in paragraph 7 of the Executive Summary, be noted;
- 5) borrowing of £288k for the purchase of hessian sacks which will have the effect of increasing recycling levels and generating a beneficial financial impact far in excess of the cost of borrowing, as set out in paragraph 8 of the Executive Summary, be approved;
- 6) it be noted that consultants will be engaged within existing budgets to review the noise levels and options with regards to recent major resurfacing works, as set out in paragraph 9 of the Executive Summary;
- 7) the quarter one position for the capital budgets, as set out in Appendix A to the report as summarised in the Executive Summary, be noted.

In line with the Council's Constitution, the Executive decisions relating to sections of the Capital Monitoring Report had been Called-In by five non-Executive Members – Councillors Bishop-Firth, Conway, Ferris, Jones and Imogen Shepherd-Dubey.

The Call-In stated that three of the Executive decisions should be reviewed for the following reasons:

Item 2 – Appendix B - There has been no scrutiny of this rescheduling. We do not know what the impact on Council services will be or if any of the costs are likely to increase due to any delay. The decision making behind this re-phasing, should be reviewed by OSMC.

Item 3 – Dinton Activity Centre - There is no mention of what changes are being made? There is no business case and reports on how this money is to be spent. Where is the decision to make these changes to the project? Why has this not been brought forward for scrutiny and for a decision?

Item 5 – Reusable Sacks - How can this money be agreed if there has been no decision to change the waste collection process? Where is the report and the business case? Where is the scrutiny? There is a need to examine the choices and agree the change, before agreeing to spend money.

The Chairman explained the format of the meeting and set out the order of business for the Call-In debate.

Councillor Clive Jones addressed the Committee and explained that the Executive decisions had been called in on the following grounds:

Officers and Members had worked very hard during the pandemic to maintain the delivery of key services and provide support for vulnerable residents. However, even during the pandemic, the Council's decision making procedures had to be followed in order to ensure that sound decisions were being made. If this had happened, there would have been no need for the Call-In to take place.

Clive stated that, in relation to the purchase of reusable sacks, the Leader of the Council had claimed that delays following the Call-In would cost the Council between £90k and £100k. However, the delays had resulted from the fact that the Executive had made

decisions using incomplete information. The Executive Forward Programme, published on 30 July, included reference to consideration of the sacks issue at the meeting on 24 September 2020.

In relation to the Decision Making Principles in the Council Constitution, Clive commented as follows:

Openness – not all of the possible options and consequences had been considered at the Executive on 30 July. For example, in relation to delaying the care home project and the purchase of reusable sacks.

Consultation – the options paper for replacement of black recycling boxes was not seen by the Executive Member until 28 July, after the despatch of the Executive Agenda. There was no scrutiny of the re-phasing of the Capital Programme. There was no supporting paper explaining the additional £600k cost of the Dinton Activity Centre project. The Executive were not able to ask detailed questions due to the limited information in front of them.

As long-standing Members were aware, Executive decisions taken using partial information frequently resulted in poor decisions which required further consideration and extra cost.

Parry Batth put the following question to Clive Jones

In relation to the consultant's wet waste option appraisal report, this was received by me on 28 July. At the Executive on 30 July the main objective was to secure funding as there was concern that we were moving into the season of wetter weather. Clive commented that the issue was about the Executive having the full information in front of it when it considered the funding.

Committee Members put the following questions to Clive Jones:

As the Lib Dem lead Member on Environment, with a monthly Officer briefing, would Clive have expected to receive information earlier? Clive confirmed that he had asked frequent questions about the replacement of black boxes and that Officers had discussed a trial of new arrangements at the end of 2019.

In the context of the financial pressures facing the Council, how robust were the projected savings relating to the replacement of black boxes by reusable sacks? Clive stated that the projected saving was £600k compared to making no changes. However, the calculations and assumptions underlying this figure were not presented to the Executive when the decision was made on 30 July.

How were the other Berkshire councils coping with the challenge of wet paper and card? Clive stated that Bracknell, Reading and West Berkshire used wheelie-bins. WBC Officers had not considered the option of wheelie-bins as part of the recent decision on reusable sacks.

One of the Council's decision making principles was "due consultation". What did this mean in the context of the decisions that were called-in? Clive stated that there should have been consultation with residents on the reusable sacks as this change affected every household. Officers were discussing a trial in late 2019, but nothing had materialised.

In relation to the reusable sacks, the options report gave examples of other councils using sacks for dry recyclable waste. Did the report provide sufficient evidence to enable a sound decision? Clive stated that the report did not indicate how long the sacks had been in use. Nor did it provide any feedback on quality or service delivery issues.

In relation to the use of reusable sacks, the Council had carried out public consultation some years ago on the option of wheelie-bins. Residents were clearly in favour of the current system. Clive stated that the situation may have changed over time. For example, the introduction of brown bins had been a success and may have helped to change residents' views.

Parry Batth and John Kaiser addressed the Committee and set out the Executive's response to the Call-In.

John Kaiser commented on the financial aspects of the Call-In. In relation to the reusable waste sacks, John stated that the proposal would deliver net cost savings of £400k per annum. The proposal had been submitted to the Executive in order to earmark the funding, pending a further decision on implementation. In relation to the Dinton Activity Centre, it was good financial management to take a decision on a supplementary estimate as quickly as possible. The re-phasing of the Capital Programme was also a routine occurrence, again part of sound financial management. The specific items for re-phasing were discussed with the relevant services in line with the aim of focussing on key priority areas.

Parry Bath commented on the decisions relating to the Dinton Activity Centre and the reusable recycling sacks. In relation to Dinton, Parry stated that the pre-application planning consultation had identified the need for additional expenditure, for example in relation to the indoor climbing wall and the new pedestrian bridge. The additional costs would be funded by the service.

In relation to the reusable sacks, Parry stated that market testing in 2017 had confirmed residents' support for the current method of service delivery using blue bags and black boxes rather than wheelie-bins. At the end of 2019, the "Stamp out the Damp" campaign had indicated the need for a longer term solution for wet paper and card. The only change under consideration was the change of receptacle from black boxes to reusable bags. The basic service delivery model remained unchanged. On 30 July the Executive had agreed the funding for the change, pending a further decision at the September Executive.

Graham Ebers addressed the Committee on the issue of transparency in the Executive report. In relation to the re-phasing of the Capital Programme, Graham confirmed that this was routinely carried out every year. Any changes followed detailed discussions with the relevant service. If anything, this year's re-phasing was more transparent than previous years. In relation to the waste sacks, this was not a change of policy and, therefore, Graham felt that the Executive decision was in line with the Council's Constitution. In relation to the Dinton Activity Centre, as the proposed borrowing would be repaid through additional service income, this was also in line with the Constitution.

Clive Jones put the following questions to the Executive Members and Officers:

To Graham Ebers – how could the Executive make effective decisions on re-phasing the Capital Programme without understanding the detailed narrative behind each change?

Graham confirmed that detailed work had taken place with departments to understand the impact of re-phasing and to ensure a focus on key priorities. The impact of Covid-19 meant that resources had to be targeted on priority areas.

To John Kaiser – why was funding for the purchase of reusable sacks approved without a detailed options report or business case? John confirmed that the Executive had agreed to set money aside pending a further decision on the preferred option.

To Peter Baveystock – did the Executive decision give a green light to purchase the reusable sacks? Peter confirmed that the decision was to ring-fence funding, but that negotiations would have commenced with potential contractors.

To Peter Baveystock – the consultant's option appraisal report was not ready in time for the Executive Agenda despatch on 23 July, so why wasn't the Executive meeting delayed until the report was available? Peter confirmed that changing the meeting date would have been possible but was not considered necessary. The decision to change to reusable sacks was not considered to be a change of policy. The change in the market for paper and card was known earlier in the year but the impact of Covid-19 and details of delivery times impacted on the decision making process.

Committee Members put the following questions to the Executive Members and Officers:

The consultant's report was circulated to Executive Members on 28 July, but a press release was also circulated on that date. This was how Members found out about the proposed change to reusable sacks. There was also a concern about the health and safety aspect of one handed lifting of the sacks. Had this issue been risk assessed? Peter Baveystock confirmed that the Council's contractor, Veolia, was satisfied that handling of the sacks would be safe.

Did the consultants look at any other options apart from reusable sacks? Why were Members not informed about the other options? Peter Baveystock confirmed that the consultant's report included analysis of other options such as boxes with lids and caps for the black boxes.

The consultant's report was based on two quarters of rainfall data and the six month period used was one of the wettest on record. Peter Baveystock commented that the rainfall projections were based on actual rather than projected data.

The Council's Constitution stated that expenditure over £50k should be supported by a business case. Had the business case for the reusable sacks been agreed yet? Peter Baveystock confirmed that the business case would be submitted to the Executive at its meeting on 24 September.

As mentioned earlier, what did "due consultation" mean in the context of the Executive decision on the reusable sacks? Graham Ebers commented that, in the context of the decision taken by the Executive, there was no requirement for consultation as the decision was supported by the Executive Member and did not constitute a change in policy.

Parry Batth and John Kaiser summed up the Executive response to the Call-In.

John Kaiser stated that re-phasing of the Capital Programme happened each year and was good financial management. The re-phasing followed detail work with the relevant services and did not have any negative impacts. The impact of Covid-19 meant that the Council had to focus its resources on key priorities.

Parry Batth stated that the £600k additional funding for the Dinton Activity Centre arose out of the results of planning requirements and public consultation. The additional funding would be financed from additional income generated by the new centre. Consequently, there were sound business reasons for the decision.

Parry Batth stated that the proposed borrowing of £288k for reusable sacks did not constitute a change in policy. It was more of a minor change in service delivery. The consultant's report was available and demonstrated the financial savings arising out of the proposal.

Clive Jones summed up the arguments in favour of the Call-In

Clive stated that the Call-In would not have been necessary if the correct procedures had been followed and the Executive had received all the relevant information. However, this had not happened.

In relation to the reusable sacks, the Executive Member did not see the option appraisal report until after the despatch of the Executive Agenda. Additional costs for the Council arose out of the poor decision making process rather than the Call-In. Officers had confirmed that purchase of the reusable sacks would not happen until after the Executive meeting on 24 September. Members were aware that poor decision making often resulted in the need for further decisions and additional costs to the Council.

The Committee considered the evidence supporting the Call-In and the response from the Executive.

In relation to Item 2 – rephrasing of parts of the Capital Programme (Appendix B), it was proposed by Oliver Whittle and seconded by Emma Hobbs that the Executive decision be confirmed.

On being put to the vote, the Chairman confirmed that the proposal was approved.

In relation to Item 3 - £600k borrowing for the Dinton Activity Centre, it was proposed by Sarah Kerr and seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey that

- 1) the Executive decision be confirmed;
- 2) the Chairman write to the Leader of the Council to request that, in future, project plans for Capital projects are properly costed before consideration by the Executive, to ensure that large amounts of funding are not added at a later date.

On being put to the vote, the Chairman confirmed that the proposal was approved.

In relation to Item 5 – borrowing £288k for the purchase of reusable sacks, it was proposed by Sarah Kerr and seconded by Rachelle Shepherd-Dubey that the decision be referred back to the Executive for further consideration, to include a fully costed business case (as set out in the Constitution) and trialling of potential solutions.

On being put to the vote, the Chairman confirmed that the proposal was not approved.

It was then proposed by Emma Hobbs and seconded by Alison Swaddle that the Executive decision be confirmed.

On being put to the vote, the Chairman confirmed that the proposal was approved.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) in relation to Item 2 – re-phasing of parts of the Capital Programme (Appendix B), the 30 July Executive decision be confirmed;
- 2) in relation to Item 3 - £600k borrowing for the Dinton Activity Centre, the 30 July Executive decision be confirmed;
- 3) in relation to Item 3 - £600k borrowing for the Dinton Activity Centre, the Chairman write to the Leader of the Council to request that, in future, project plans for Capital projects are properly costed before consideration by the Executive, to ensure that large amounts of funding are not added at a later date;
- 4) in relation to Item 5 - borrowing £288k for the purchase of reusable sacks, the 30 July Executive decision to set aside budget for an alternative to black dry recycling boxes, be confirmed.

29. PROVISION OF REUSABLE SACKS FOR DRY RECYCLING: CALL-IN RESPONSE

This report was considered in conjunction with Agenda item 27: Call-In of Executive Decisions (see Minute 29 above).