

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2015 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.30 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Keith Baker (Chairman), Julian McGhee-Sumner, Pauline Jorgensen, Philip Mirfin, Anthony Pollock and Angus Ross

Other Councillors Present

Prue Bray
Lindsay Ferris
John Halsall
Norman Jorgensen
Dianne King
Malcolm Richards
Beth Rowland
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

48. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Charlotte Haitham Taylor and John Kaiser. The Leader of Council confirmed that Councillor John Halsall would be attending the meeting on behalf of Councillor Kaiser however in accordance with legislation he could take part in any discussions but was not entitled to vote.

49. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meetings of the Executive and the Extraordinary Executive held on 30 July 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

50. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Anthony Pollock declared a personal interest in Item 53, Council Owned Companies Business, by virtue of the fact that he was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of Optalis. Councillor Pollock remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor Pauline Jorgensen declared a personal interest in Item 53, Council Owned Companies Business, by virtue of the fact that her husband was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillor Jorgensen remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillors Julian McGhee-Sumner and Philip Mirfin declared personal interests in Item 62, Wokingham Town Centre Environmental Improvement Programme – Phase One, by virtue of the fact that they were both members of Wokingham Town Council which would, if the matter was approved, contribute funding towards the Improvement Programme. Councillors McGhee-Sumner and Mirfin remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

51. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

51.1 Imogen Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question which was answered by the Deputy Executive Member in his absence:

Question

In July 2013 the Executive added options B and C to the consultation on the route of the Northern Distributor Road, which was originally only going to include Option A. 76% of people wanted option B. One of the main reasons people in Emmbrook wanted Option B was that it meant traffic would be diverted away from Toutley Road. In March 2014 the Executive resolved to continue working up Option B as the route of the road. 18 months later, the report in the agenda says the route will be Option C with a small part of Option A, which means all the traffic will be using Toutley Road after all.

Why have you allowed people to go on thinking Option B was going to happen for the last 18 months?

Answer

The Executive considered the matter at their meeting on 27 March 2014 and the report to that meeting reported that the public preference was for alternative B; one of the three alternative route options in Emmbrook supported by 76 of the consultation responses.

The consultation raised a number of other route variations that required further investigation and the report summarised the requirements to refine engineering, environmental and planning issues prior to any formal preferred route being seen by the Executive.

There was no commitment at that time to simply go away and come back with the same scheme. The agreed process was to find a technically feasible and deliverable highways solution. The minutes record the allocation of funds to progress the refinement of North Wokingham Distribution Road option B design options to gain greater confidence in the scheme delivery ahead of a later Executive decision to proceed with a preferred scheme for detailed design.

The 18 months since 2014 have been used to refine engineering, environmental and planning issues which has resulted in the scheme before us.

The Leader of Council provided the following response:

Since I was the individual involved I thought I would provide some background. First of all on no occasion did any cast iron guarantee be given by anyone that route B would be what was delivered. Yes it was the favoured route by residents but all communications clearly indicated that the final route was not set in stone.

The route is actually a combination of parts of routes A, B and C. The Twyford Road along Toutley Road to Old Forest Road link is actually from route A. The link between the Toutley Road/Old Forest Road to the new part of the road, which swings over to the Arboretum, is from both routes A and C. The small part of the road which actually takes the road over there, towards the motorway, is from route C. Finally the Route through the Arboretum and down to Reading Road is from both routes B and C.

On 20 January 2014 I presented to the North Wokingham Forum and the final slide had a Health Warning and the Health Warning said quite clearly "the Council cannot confirm the approved route until all of these steps are completed." This "Health Warning" was

highlighted in as many ways as possible to reinforce the importance of this statement. Until the detailed technical study had been completed nothing could be confirmed.

At the Executive Meeting on 27 March 2014 the report had already suggested variations from the “pure” option B creating option B2. This was to go along Matthewsgreen Road and then swing through the Toutley Industrial Estate. Very few, if any, complaints were made at the time.

In July 2014 the Council reiterated that “the exact position may be affected to some extent by the location of the SANG and other factors such as avoiding the flood plain.” So yet another warning that the route was not set in stone.

That is at least three such caveats that the route was not set in stone and there were many more repeat warnings in many e-mails between myself and others.

The adoption of the small bit of Old Forest Road from the Toutley Road junction then swinging across to the Arboretum from options A and C actually benefits a huge number of residents; in fact almost all of Old Forest Road. This is because the section from Reading Road and this particular point will become very unattractive to anyone going to Toutley Industrial Estate. That will mean a reduction in heavy traffic right in front of their houses. So if we did stick to exactly the route B as you want then every single resident in that part of Old Forest Road would actually lose out which I think is frankly nonsense.

Supplementary Question

The fact is that the route is going down Toutley Road. What are you going to do to protect the people who live there from the future impact of the traffic?

Supplementary Answer

At the moment the detailed engineering work is being carried out and until that is completed we will not be able to answer that question adequately. The engineering work will follow the decision tonight.

51.2 Peter Must asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question which was answered by the Deputy Executive Member in his absence:

Question

In noting the paper proposing funds for Phase One of an Environmental Improvement Programme for Wokingham Town Centre may I first point out that that the Summary of the Report refers erroneously to the ‘Old Town Hall’; it is just ‘The Town Hall’ since we don’t have a new one elsewhere. Secondly, ask the Executive Member to spell out what ‘a suitable level of consultation’ will actually entail and when it is expected to take place?

Answer

A number of consultation sessions will take place to share with interested parties and the general public the designs for the Market Place improvements. These will include targeted invitations to known interested groups such as the Wokingham Society, residents’ associations, together with an open invitation to the residents at large. The intention is to be as inclusive as possible.

These are being planned mid to late-November and dates will be confirmed in the next few weeks. Two sessions have and are taking place in relation to access. Disability groups

such as: the Alzheimer's Society; learning disability group CLASP; Guide Dogs; and Healthwatch met on 7 September and will meet on 25 September and have been providing very useful feedback to the Project Group which is being used to inform the design. Separate dates have been provided for an empty market place and one when the market is trading.

Supplementary Question

Given that there isn't going to be a planning application associated with this redevelopment how will the community be told what has been decided eventually?

Supplementary Answer

The plan is to use all available communication channels for both consultation and feedback and this will include direct contact with relevant groups; use of both Councils' websites; social media; local press etc. The project is understandably liaising with the Regeneration Team and will be taking advice about their contact methods.

Wokingham Town Council has good relationships with many organisations within the Town including the Wokingham Society, residents' associations etc and will be using these links.

I would happily welcome suggestions to ensure that all information is circulated as widely as possible. You can contact Jan Nowecki and if you require her number I can give it to you.

51.3 Trevor Sleet had asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Question

Item 54 – North Wokingham Distributor Road

Back in June 2012 WBC produced a draft report entitled: WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL, CANTLEY PARK MASTERPLAN, DRAFT REPORT – VERSION 2A JUNE 2012.

This report was produced by Knight Kavanagh and Page (KKP) on behalf of Wokingham Borough Council. The report states that the current Cantley Park playing field area will be increased in size from 12.6204 hectares by a further 5.3912 hectares. This increase will be achieved by expanding the current Cantley playing field area by creating another two additional areas on the other side of Bell Foundary Lane.

The question I would like to ask is: If the expansion of Cantley Park, as detailed in the above report, goes ahead how will the safety of the users of Cantley be ensured when the NWDR is routed along Bell Foundary Lane?

In light of Mr Sleet being unable to attend the meeting the following written answer was provided:

Answer

The 2012 Cantley masterplanning consultation considered options to address Strategic Development Location growth in Wokingham, however this was overtaken by events following agreement to the sports hub in the south at Grays Fruit Farm when members considered a report entitled Ryeish Green and Grays Fruit Farm Sports Hub Projects at the Executive on 31 July 2015. The extension of Cantley into Bell Farm will therefore not

be developed any further and there would be no need to develop any crossing proposals accordingly.

51.4 Robert Millen asked the Leader of Council the following question:

Question

Item 54 – North Wokingham Distributor Road

As shown by the background to this question supplied separately the Council have reneged on their promise to the residents to provide the route of their choice. In view of this I put it to the Leader of the Council that this shows that the Council had a missed placed confidence in their own abilities and authority, and did not take all the factors that could impact on the NDR's alignment and delivery into consideration from the outset. Does he accept that in this respect it has unjustifiably raised the expectations of the residents of Emmbrook and has shown a lack of competence in the handling of this matter?

Answer

Unfortunately in your background data you have actually misrepresented the facts and therefore I do not agree with your comments. Again on no occasion did any cast iron guarantee be given by anyone that route B would be what was delivered. Yes it was the favoured route by residents but all communications clearly indicated that the final route was not set in stone.

As you have heard earlier at least three such caveats were made on 20 January 2014, 27 March 2014 and July 2014 that the route was not set in stone and there were many more repeat warnings in many e-mails between myself and others.

So let me give you a few variations that have come out, as an example of why you could not set it in stone, from the detailed technical evaluation. Initially we thought that the scrap yard owner would sell the corner of his yard as needed for options B and C. Unfortunately despite extensive negotiations with him, he was absolutely resolute that he would not sell. Since CPO regulations cannot force a land owner to sell if there is a viable alternative this cannot be used and would not get approval by the Secretary of State. So this forced it down the small link from route A and C.

But as I said before variations can actually bring great benefit to some residents. In the "pure" option B the net effect of the road swinging across the flood plain is that the total length of Old Forest Road would still be attractive for traffic going to Toutley Depot i.e. the residents would not have any benefit. With the adoption of the link from route C swinging over to the Arboretum means that the Old Forest Road from Reading Road to that point will effectively become a very difficult route to travel on if you are going to the Industrial Estate. The Old Forest residents along that lengthy stretch will be most pleased about the potential reduction of traffic outside their front doors. Now if we did what you and the previous questioner asked and stuck to a "pure" option B, then we wouldn't be doing that. Also there have been no complaints about this particular change.

Supplementary Question

When in June last year the Council decided to abandon alternative B, as voted for by the residents, they published an open letter outlining their decision and reason for it. This letter stated that they would arrange a public meeting to which they would invite residents to come along to discuss this very important issue with them. Are they going to publish a

similar letter and invitation to the current proposed changes to Toutley Road to use Toutley Road as part of the NWDR?

Supplementary Answer

I am glad you raised that letter because it was one of the ones that gave you the caveat as you have quite rightly put in your background paper.

In terms of having a public meeting there will be a decision made on the route tonight and I do not see any advantage of having a public meeting when the decision has already been made.

52. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

52.1 Lindsay Ferris asked the Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities the following question:

Question

It is now a year since the seven apartments at the Silk Court development on the corner of Market Place and Rose Street were put on sale. The Council's press release of 9th September 2014 stated "Income from the sale of the apartments at Peach Place corner will be used to offset the costs of the refurbishment project and potentially fund other schemes within the Borough".

One year on, how much funding from these sales will be made available for other schemes within the Borough?

Answer

The receipts from Silk Court will be ploughed back into the Town Centre scheme to minimise its debt position at the end of the project.

This will enable the Council to continually control the finances of the scheme and to minimise its financing costs both during the scheme and on completion.

Assuming an approach whereby the Council retains all commercial assets (this decision by the way has yet to be made) the expectation for the scheme, overall, is to provide a net contribution to the council tax payer and after capital financing costs this will be approximately £1.4m pa.

Supplementary Question

Am I correct in saying that the flats are generating nothing to anywhere else within the Borough?

Supplementary Answer

Essentially they are contributing towards the overall cost of the total regeneration and at the end of that yes the amount that is coming out, which we have estimated to be £1.4m pa should they not be sold, will go towards other items within the Borough and assist all tax payers in the Borough.

52.2 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question which was answered by the Deputy Executive Member:

Question

Item 54 – North Wokingham Distributor Road

As a Winnersh Councillor I am absolutely horrified by the proposals for the roundabout at the Reading Road end of the Northern Distributor Road, which will make it very very difficult for residents of Sadlers Lane, Green Lane, and the houses in between to get in or out of their roads. This design of the roundabout was not discussed with Winnersh Councillors and we weren't told about it until a few weeks ago. Will you meet with the Winnersh Councillors from both political parties to discuss how to make the design more acceptable?

Answer

The needs of residents on Sadlers Lane and Green Lane have been considered in the preliminary design for the roundabout on the A329 where it junctions with the proposed North Wokingham Distributor Road.

Clearly there is more work to do on the entire project and this includes the detail of how the junction will work. We had always envisaged further work with local residents near to this junction to deliver the best suitable route. However it was pointless undertaking this work prior to the route being agreed by the Executive.

If the route is agreed we will undertake additional work that will certainly include discussion with local residents and Members.

Supplementary Question

The proposed roundabouts on the Wokingham side of the M4, which will make this the two roundabout bridge by the way, after we put in the Winnersh relief road which will have a roundabout on both sides now. How can the two roundabouts be made to work together correctly so we don't wind up with a car park on the Reading Road?

Supplementary Answer

We don't actually think that will happen and you will be invited to comment on the design at a later stage so that it does not happen.

52.3 Beth Rowland asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question which was answered by the Deputy Executive Member in his absence:

Question

Item 54 – North Wokingham Distributor Road

Consultation on the route of the road was carried out in the Autumn of 2013 and showed a clear preference for Route B, which involved building the road right across the floodplain of the Emmbrook, not just in one place, but on both sides of Toutley Industrial Estate. Keith Baker raised this as a potential problem at a North Wokingham Community Forum in January 2014, and Angus Ross raised it again at the Executive meeting in March 2014 when it was decided to proceed with working up option B as the route the Executive wanted to carry on with. The Refinement report produced in preparation for tonight's

meeting shows that environmental impact and increased flood risk to residential and commercial properties was a major factor in changing the choice of route from option B to what is almost identical to option C. The Council knew the Emmbrook flooded, and they knew about the risks of building on a flood plain. Why did you continue with option B when you knew about the flood plain risks?

Answer

At the March 2014 Executive meeting it was resolved to allocate funds to progress with the refinement of the North Wokingham Distributor Road option B design options to gain greater confidence in scheme delivery ahead of a later Executive decision to proceed with a Preferred Scheme for detailed design to be agreed. At the time there was not conclusive technical evidence that the route through the flood plain was undeliverable. The additional work commissioned did demonstrate this to be the case and so this section of route option B no longer forms a part of the preferred route

The Leader of Council provided the following response:

As you have quoted me in this question I welcome the chance to correct an inaccuracy in your question. First of all the route is not identical to route C. It is actually a combination of parts of routes A, B and C as I explained earlier so I am not going to repeat them here.

Now remember that three out of four respondents to the consultation wanted the road to go across the flood plain if it was technically possible. The vast majority of these, and you have acknowledged that in your question, would have known about the flooding possibilities yet they still chose that route rather than route C which would have avoided this issue from day one. Therefore it was only right and proper that Officers carried out the detailed technical evaluation to see if there was any possibility that this could be achieved. Technology is advancing all the time so there could have been a solution but unfortunately in this case there was not.

Supplementary Question

Councillors in Wokingham were briefed about the likely route in April and I understand that Emmbrook Councillors were given an earlier briefing in February.

In a leaflet that Philip Mirfin put out in the May elections, dated 7 May 2015, he said "option B is still expected with minor adjustments around the flood plain to be the chosen option." Why did he say that and why in June, when a public meeting was held had it already been taken off the considerations?

Supplementary Answer provided by Councillor Mirfin

Because at the time quite simply that was what we believed and it was only at a later stage that we found out that that was not possible. Quite simply we believed that to be the case at the time and that is why we said what we did.

52.4 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question which was answered by the Deputy Executive Member in his absence:

Question

Item 54 – North Wokingham Distributor Road

The Executive agreed to consult on the Northern Distributor Road in July 2013. The consultation took place between September and November 2013. The outcome of the consultation was reported to the Executive in March 2014 and a decision was made to

concentrate on option B as the route of the road. Tonight, September 2015, we have the report with the final proposed route.

At the time the Executive agreed to the consultation in July 2013, feasibility and viability work had been done on option A, which was the “technical recommendation”. At the North Wokingham Forum in January 2014, Keith Baker’s minuted responses to questions show that the Council did not appear to have started detailed technical work on option B but had only carried out high level indicative studies. When was feasibility and viability work carried out on option B?

Answer

At the March 2014 Executive meeting it was resolved to allocate funds to progress with the refinement of the North Wokingham Distributor Road option B design options to gain greater confidence in scheme delivery ahead of a later Executive decision to proceed with a Preferred Scheme for detailed design to be agreed.

This work has been undertaken since then and a preferred route developed which is being considered by the Executive this evening.

Supplementary Question

In answer to a question from myself at the Executive meeting in July 2013, which was when the consultation was agreed to go ahead, Keith said (and I am quoting from the minutes here): “All the routes do have their own individual issues none of which are show stoppers. If they were then they would not have been fully investigated via the feasibility study.”

I think we have heard several times this evening that actually nothing, apart from route A had been fully investigated by any feasibility study. So I am interested in how Keith could make that claim at the time?

Supplementary Answer provided by the Leader of Council

At that time there was a high level feasibility study and my comment was based on that. In my later presentations, as you know and I have quoted it several times, I actually put caveats in there because we were beginning to get more information.

Until you get the final detailed technical specification you can never be 100%.

53. COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES' BUSINESS

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

The Executive considered a report relating to an update on the operational and budget monitoring position for the month ending 31 July 2015.

The Leader of Council advised the meeting that Mette Le Jakobsen had been appointed as the Managing Director of Optalis and the Company had also appointed a new financial director. Councillor Baker congratulated Ms Le Jakobsen on her appointment.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 31 July 2015 be noted;
- 2) the operational update for the period to 31 July 2015 be noted.

54. NORTH WOKINGHAM DISTRIBUTOR ROAD

The Executive considered a report setting out the proposed deliverable route option to provide the alignment for the North Wokingham Distributor Road (NWDR) which would ensure appropriate mitigation of traffic impacts from the development of the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL) on existing residential areas.

The Deputy Executive Member for Planning and Highways reported that the NWDR was essential to service the SDL and would allow it to be developed. Councillor Halsall highlighted the recommended route as outlined in the report and the fact that not making a decision could potentially result in a loss of a £24m Government grant and no road.

Councillor Mirfin made a statement on his position as an Emmbrook Councillor. He advised that although he had campaigned hard for option B, which was now apparently untenable due mainly to the cost, flood land and potential loss of Government grant, in order to move the road forward for the benefit of the majority of Emmbrook residents he would be supporting the latest iteration of the route as this would mean that the developers would no longer be able to prevaricate about signing up contractors for their section of their road. This should mean that construction vehicles should be able to access from Twyford Road sooner rather than later which would minimise the impact from access from the Toutley end of the site. Councillor Mirfin went on to say that he had not taken this decision lightly but could not support any further protracted discussions that could result in the loss of Government grant which could then result in the development going ahead with only the means of access and egress for the new residents through the existing Emmbrook Roads. He recognised that this view differed from some of the Emmbrook residents but felt that it was the only remaining option to ensure that total disruption was kept to a minimum for all existing residents.

The Executive Member for Environment highlighted the importance of considering flooding issues and taking note of them, particularly as it was something that the public were very concerned about. Therefore one of the main reasons for the proposed route was because no suitable option could be found across the flood plain.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the deliverable route option to provide the alignment for the North Wokingham Distributor road and its progress through detailed design to a full planning application and the funding necessary for this be agreed;
- 2) Officers continue the process of securing land required to deliver the deliverable route option;
- 3) the expenditure of £1.25m, with a profile of £250,000 in Year 1 and £500,000 in both Years 2 and 3 be agreed.

55. INTRODUCTION OF CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT POWERS

The Executive considered a report on the proposal to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement Powers (CPE) which would give powers to the Council to enforce parking restrictions within their area of responsibility. Within Wokingham Borough parking restrictions were currently enforced by Thames Valley Police, however this was considered as a low priority for them and as a result they applied little resource to it.

The Deputy Executive Member for Planning and Highways informed the meeting that a large number of complaints were received from areas throughout the Borough about illegal

parking and parking abuse. The proposal therefore should increase the utilisation of car parks and give the ability for the Council to respond to residents' demands for new restrictions and regulations.

Councillor Halsall highlighted the results of a survey carried out in 2015 in Wokingham, Twyford, Shinfield and Woodley which indicated that as many as 1 in 4 vehicles parked illegally in and around those town centres.

It was noted that if the Council took on enforcement powers they would have to be applied across the Borough and implementation of the scheme would take between 18 months-2 years from agreement. The Council would however retain control of when, where and how it would enforce these powers which would enable specific problem areas to be targeted and work could be carried out with towns and parishes to determine need. Also if towns and parishes had a specific need they would be able to supplement the Council's provision.

Councillor Halsall advised that it was not permissible to make a profit on the scheme and the proposed management of the scheme was designed to be revenue neutral.

Councillor Jorgensen advised that she reluctantly supported the scheme as she felt that the Police were meant to carry out parking enforcement and were funded to do so and therefore the Council should not be taking on this responsibility given its budget pressures. In response Councillor Halsall stated that the Police would not be withdrawing from this area and would continue to police dangerous and criminal parking as they had in the past. He also highlighted that Wokingham was part of the 1% of local authorities throughout the country, and the only Borough in the Thames Valley area, who had not taken up these powers and there was a very well developed scheme where the administration of the fines was undertaken by a third party and adjudicated by an independent third party and would not become a Council responsibility.

Members were pleased that the introduction of CPE was being proposed as, particularly in the towns, commuters parking their cars on streets had an impact on the life of residents and on occasions stopped emergency and refuse vehicles getting to their homes.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the preparation and submission of an application to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement powers within the Borough be approved;
- 2) the capital expenditure of £34,000 in the current year and £34,000 in Year 2 be approved.

56. DESIGNATION OF TWO NEW AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS

The Executive considered a report on the designation of two new air quality management areas i.e. Wokingham and Twyford town centres.

The Executive Member for Resident Services advised the meeting that both these areas had been identified as having elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) which was slightly over the maximum requirement set out by the Environmental Act 1995. These findings had triggered a Detailed Assessment and the Council had a statutory requirement to designate these areas as Air Quality Management Areas which would allow the

development and implementation of a mitigation strategy (Action Plan) to improve air quality in these areas.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the areas in Wokingham Town Centre and Twyford Town Centre, as identified on Plans 1 and 2 as set out in the report, be designated as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) under Section 83(1) of the Environmental Act 1995;
- 2) the spend as profiled in the financial information section of the report be agreed;
- 3) that an Action Plan be developed to manage the Air Quality Management Area within 12-18 months of the designation.

57. APPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE AND LEASE TO YELLOW BRICK NURSERY AT CHALFONT PAVILLION

The Executive considered a report on the proposal to appropriate the Public Open Space and grant a 20 year lease of Chalfont Pavilion to the Yellow Brick Nursery.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities tabled a revised plan in order to clarify further the boundary of the proposed leased area and advised that a prospective tenant, who had occupied the property since the 1990s under a license agreement, wanted to take a 20 year lease on the property as they had secured SureStart funding and had invested privately to extend and enhance the building. Under the terms of the lease the licensee would be required to carry out approximately £50k of enhancements to the property and would pay the Council a rent of £6,500 pa, which would be reviewed every 5 years.

Councillor Jorgensen commented, in her role as Ward Member for Hillside, that she was pleased with the proposal as the tenant currently provided a valued local service and there would be no detriment to local residents. It was noted that there was also no detriment to public open space.

RESOLVED: That consent be given to the appropriation of the public open space, including the building shown hatched on the tabled plan, and to the granting of a 20 year lease of Chalfont Pavilion to Yellow Brick Nursery on a full repairing and insuring lease, at a commencing rent of £6,500 per annum.

58. CHARGING FOR TECHNICAL APPROVAL OF HIGHWAY STRUCTURES

The Executive considered a report on the proposal for charging for technical approval of highway structures which would make the process clearer and more transparent.

Members were advised that currently when advice was provided to third parties eg developers on highways structures the Council bore the cost. The proposal was that developers wishing to construct or change highway structures eg bridges, embankments and retaining walls would now be charged which would allow the Council to recover the full cost of the process.

RESOLVED: That the proposal for charges for technical approval of highway structures be approved and for those charges to come into effect immediately.

59. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)

The Executive considered a report setting out changes to the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The Deputy Executive Member for Planning and Highways advised that the Council was required to maintain an up to date 3 year programme for Local Plans in its Local Development Scheme. Councillor Halsall highlighted the changes to the LDS and the reasons why these changes were required.

The Executive Member for Environment reported that it was essential that the Council moved forward with the Minerals and Waste Local Plan as a number of neighbouring authorities had already such a plan in place or were well advanced in producing one. Councillor Ross advised that Wokingham was currently working on developing a joint plan with other councils which would mean that it would cover the area better and reduce the cost.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the updated Local Development Scheme, to be effective from 25 September 2015, be approved;
- 2) the spend of up to £800,000 for the Local Plan update, £300,000 for the Minerals & Waste Local Plan be approved and that it be noted that the budget for the Gypsy & Traveller Local Plan had already been approved;
- 3) it be noted that funding for Year 1 had already been approved through the Medium Term Financial Plan and that approval was given for Years 2 and 3.

60. BUS SERVICES - S106 RELEASE

The Executive considered a report setting out a proposal to release s106 money to improve bus services serving Mulberry Grove (Kentwood East) and to support buses serving the Johnson & Johnson site in Wokingham Without.

Members noted, as set out in the report, that the s106 money concerned had been “ring fenced” for improvements to bus services in the two areas above and if it was not utilised for these bus services then it would have to be given back to the relevant developers.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) £154,000 of s106 money be released to improve bus services serving Mulberry Grove (Kentwood East) and £252,187 to support buses serving the Johnson & Johnson site in Wokingham Without; and
- 2) the expenditure of £406,687 with a profile of: £45,846 in Year 1; £66,446 in Years 2, 3 and 4; £35,546 in Year 5; and £25,246 in Years 6 to 10, be approved.

61. SHINFIELD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Executive considered a report setting out the Council’s response to the Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan which once approved would become part of the Development Plan and therefore carry significant weight in the determination of planning applications in or affecting Shinfield Parish.

The Deputy Executive Member for Planning and Highways advised that Shinfield Parish Council were currently undertaking their pre-submission consultation on their

Neighbourhood Plan and because of a disparity between their Plan and some Council policies it was necessary to put in a formal objection. Councillor Halsall however understood that the Parish Council had agreed to the Council's objections and would therefore be incorporating them into their Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the comments on the Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan, as outlined in the report, be approved; and
- 2) they be submitted to Shinfield Parish Council as a formal objection to their consultation on the Pre-Submission Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan.

62. WOKINGHAM TOWN CENTRE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - PHASE ONE

(Councillors Julian McGhee-Sumner and Philip Mirfin declared personal interests in this item)

The Executive considered a report regarding Phase One of the Wokingham Town Centre Environmental Improvement Programme which was a joint project with Wokingham Town Council.

The Deputy Executive Member for Planning and Highways highlighted that Phase One of the project would focus on the main public space around the Market Place and the Town Hall. Funding was required to progress the project and the project was being developed by a Joint Officer Group comprising representatives from both Councils. The proposal required the release of s106 funding which would be matched funded by the Town Council.

Councillor Mirfin confirmed, in his role as the Mayor of Wokingham Town Council, that the Town Council had agreed at a recent meeting to support up to a maximum of £1.5m for the project on a matched funding basis.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) s106 funding and funding from the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Project up to a maximum of £1.5m be released subject to the receipt of at least an equivalent match funding sum from Wokingham Town council; and
- 2) all decisions necessary to implement the scheme be delegated to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Highways and the Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities.

63. STREET LIGHTING UPGRADE PROJECT - JOINT CONTRACT WITH SLOUGH, READING AND WOKINGHAM

The Executive considered a report setting out the outcome of the joint tender process with Slough and Reading Councils for a Street Lighting Upgrade Project. The project would result in more than £500k savings in its first four years through the significant reduction in energy and maintenance costs within the street lighting service. It would also: reduce CO₂ emissions and general light pollution; the risk to the public of column failures; whilst providing a better quality of light.

Members were advised that a successful bid from the DfT's Challenge Fund had been made resulting in an expected £8.12m contribution towards the total £12.12m cost of the project. In addition to the £500k savings the project would continue to deliver savings

throughout the life of the project estimated to total some £9.5m in total; even after taking into account the cost of borrowing.

Councillor Jorgensen commented that some LED lights had already been installed in a number of areas in the Boroughs and they were working well and definitely reducing the amount of light pollution. She asked that any new lights should not be erected so that they could become hidden by trees.

The Leader of Council was pleased to see that town and parish councils had been invited to potentially participate in the project.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the outcome of the joint tender process, which has been subject to EU regulations and has been advertised accordingly, be noted;
- 2) the successful joint bid to the Department of Transport's (DfT's) Challenge Fund and the resultant contribution to the project costs be noted; and
- 3) approval be given for the joint project to proceed;
- 4) the capital budget of £4m, plus the £8.12m ring fenced Government grant be approved. The expected profile for this spend is £80,000 current year, £1.825m in Year 2, £1.825m in Year 3 and £0.27m in Year 4.

64. NEW LEASE TO AMERICAN AMUSEMENTS LTD (AAL) WITHIN THE MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK (MSCP) AT CARNIVAL POOL SITE

The Executive considered a report relating to a proposal to agree a pre-let with American Amusements Ltd (AAL) to provide alternative accommodation for the relocation of Wokingham Superbowl in new premises within the new multi-storey car park building on the Carnival Pool site.

The Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities informed the meeting that following the planning application being approved for the multi-storey car park consideration was being given to enabling the retention of the popular bowling alley. It was therefore proposed that the bowling alley would be re-sited on the ground floor of the new car park.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) a pre-let with American Amusements Ltd be agreed to provide suitable alternative accommodation for the relocation of Wokingham Superbowl in new premises within the new multi-storey car park building on Carnival Pool site, subject to commercial terms;
- 2) any further related and subsidiary decisions if required to complete the transaction, including a pre-let to an alternative operator on similar or improved terms if necessary be delegated to the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader and Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities.

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