

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2015 FROM 7.30 PM TO 10.30 PM**

Members Present

Councillors: Parry Batth (Mayor), Bob Pitts (Deputy Mayor), Mark Ashwell, Alistair Auty, Keith Baker, Laura Blumenthal, Chris Bowring, Prue Bray, David Chopping, UllaKarin Clark, Gary Cowan, Lindsay Ferris, Michael Firmager, Mike Gore, Guy Grandison, Mike Haines, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, John Halsall, Pauline Helliars-Symons, Tim Holton, Philip Houldsworth, Dianne King, John Jarvis, Nicky Jerrome, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, John Kaiser, David Lee, Abdul Loyes, Tom McCann, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Ken Miall, Philip Mirfin, Barrie Patman, Anthony Pollock, Nick Ray, Malcolm Richards, Beth Rowland, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Chris Singleton, David Sleight, Chris Smith, Bill Soane, Rob Stanton, Alison Swaddle, Paul Swaddle, Simon Weeks, Bob Wyatt and Shahid Younis

44. TWO MINUTES SILENCE

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Mayor and other Members paid tribute to the victims of the Paris attacks, the late former Chief Executive Nick Gurney and the late Geoff Munday, HR Business Partner. Following these tributes the Mayor led the Council in two minutes of silence.

45. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Kate Haines, Ian Pittock, Stuart Munro and Angus Ross.

46. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Tom McCann declared a Personal Interest on the grounds that his daughter was employed by a company involved with the Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Project.

Councillor Paul Swaddle declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 51 Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles on the grounds that he had a number of clients and potential clients who operated in this area. Councillor Swaddle remained in the Chamber but did not participate in discussions of this item.

48. WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION 377

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.12 (g) of the Council's Constitution, Councillor Tom McCann proposed that Motion 377 be withdrawn due to time constraints and this was agreed by Council.

49. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

50. PETITIONS

The following Members presented petitions in relation to the matter indicated.

The Mayor's decision as to the action to be taken is set out against each petition.

Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons	Councillor Pauline Helliard-Symons presented a petition of over 260 signatures from parents at Hatch Ride School and people living on the Heathlake Park Estate regarding a safe school crossing on New Wokingham Road. <i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Planning and Highways</i>
Councillor UllaKarin Clark	Councillor UllaKarin Clark presented a petition of 21 signatures regarding parking restrictions on Caroline Drive, Wokingham. <i>To be forwarded to the Executive Member for Planning and Highways</i>

51. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed Members that he had attended the launch of a new charity, 'My Cancer My Life.'

52. LOCALISM ACT PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2015/16

The Council considered a report regarding the Localism Act Pay Policy Statement. The Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to produce and publish a Pay Policy Statement annually and for this to be approved by Full Council.

It was proposed by Keith Baker and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that the recommendation set out in the report be approved.

Beth Rowland commented that the Pay Policy had not been published in the years 2013-14 and 2014-15. Keith Baker indicated that he would ask the Director of Finance and Resources to look into the matter.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Policy Pay Statement for 2015/16 for publication on the Council's website in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 be approved.

53. GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Council considered a report on the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles as set out within the Agenda. It was noted that no changes had been made following consultation.

It was proposed by Pauline Jorgensen and seconded by Chris Bowring that the recommendation set out in the report be approved.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That under the Gambling Act 2005, the Statement of Principles as set out in the Appendix to the report be adopted.

54. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Council considered a report, as set out in the Agenda, which gave details of proposed changes to the Council's Constitution as recommended by the Constitution Review Working Group. The report detailed various proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution.

Additional amendments to those contained in the Council agenda as agreed by the Constitution Review Working Group were tabled:

Chapter 12 - Financial Regulations

12.1.17.8

“or in exceptional circumstances by the Director of Finance and Resources subject to the Executive being notified immediately and the subsequent approval by Executive at the earliest opportunity.” Amended to read *“or in exceptional circumstances by the Director of Finance and Resources subject to the Executive **having been notified** and the subsequent approval by Executive at the earliest opportunity.”*

12.1.20.11

“or other staff as appropriate” to be amended to read *“**or other authorised staff**”*.

Chapter 13 – Procurement and Contract Rules of Procedure

13.3.1.1

Add a new sentence to the beginning of the paragraph following a)-h):

“The value of a Business Case shall not be distorted or split with the aim of avoiding any threshold. The exact nature of

Paul Swaddle praised the new layout of the Procurement and Contract Rules of Procedure and commented that the Constitution Review Working Group hoped that a similar approach would be taken in future when amending other areas of the Constitution.

Prue Bray commented that the Procurement and Contract Rules of Procedure were now much shorter and easier to understand.

It was proposed by Paul Swaddle and seconded by Prue Bray that the amended recommendations be approved.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the following changes to the Council's Constitution, as put forward by the Constitution Review Working Group be approved:

- 1) Revised versions of the:
 - (a) Scheme of Delegation to Officers – Chapters 11.1, 11.2 and 11.3, as set out in Appendix A to the report;

- (b) Financial Regulations – Chapter 12.1, as set out in Appendix B to the report, and subject to the tabled amendments to Rules 12.1.17.8 and 12.1.20.11; and
 - (c) Procurement and Contract Rules of Procedure – Chapter 13.1 as set out in Appendix C to the report, and subject to the tabled amendment to Rule 13.3.1.1;
- 2) the following wording to be added to Rule 4.4.3.1a) Audit Activity – Monitoring the Council’s Operations:

“In addition to approve any significant additional consulting services engaged upon during the year, since the submission of the annual internal audit plan.”

55. APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY SCRUTINY OFFICER

The Council considered a report regarding the appointment of Neil Carr as the Statutory Scrutiny Officer as set out within the Agenda.

Members welcomed Neil to his new role.

It was proposed by Pauline Jorgensen and seconded by Keith Baker that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Neil Carr, Principal Democratic Services Officer, be designated as the Council’s Statutory Scrutiny Officer; and
- 2) Section 6.3.37 of the Council’s Constitution be amended as set out in the report.

56. UPDATE FROM FIRE AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES

Pauline Helliard-Symons presented an update on the work of the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority as set out within the Agenda.

Laura Blumenthal commented that according to St John Ambulance over 43% of fires in the UK were believed to be caused by arson. She asked if the figures for Wokingham Borough mirrored this statistic. Pauline Helliard-Symons indicated that in 2014-15 24% of fires in Berkshire begun as arson and in Wokingham 23.7%, which was approximately half the national average. From April-November 2015 27.4% of fires in Berkshire and 28.5% of fires in Wokingham began as arson. She went on to summarise some of the work carried out over the last 12 months, including fire setter education; partnership working with Thames Valley Police and the Rainbow Park community; a Junior Warden scheme which supported visits to fire stations and Fire Safety days at various schools.

John Kaiser asked about the Government’s suggestion that the Police and Crime Commissioner take control over the Fire Service. Pauline Helliard-Symons commented that the Fire Authority, the Council and the Police Crime Commissioner, Anthony Stansfeld, had all written to the Government opposing this idea since the roles performed by both

bodies were completely different. It was noted that there was already a will to share services and premises where appropriate.

Pauline Jorgensen asked for an update on the progress of collaborating with other emergency services in order to reduce costs and improve overall services. Pauline Helliar-Symons commented that a pilot scheme on co-responding had been set up with South Central Ambulance Service which was running out of Hungerford Fire Station. Fire fighters had attended 146 medical calls in the last 148 days. Details were being developed to run the scheme out of more of the fire stations including Wokingham and possibly East Slough or Langley, Pangbourne and the Henley and Wargrave area. The Wokingham fire fighters were currently undergoing medical training and it was hoped that co-responding in Wokingham fire station would start early next year. A number of options to share property were being explored with the Police and a memorandum of understanding had been signed by the Thames Valley Police and the three Thames Valley Fire Authorities. In addition, with Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, there was a joint control room where emergency calls were received, which was more efficient and would save approximately £1million a year between the three fire services. A memorandum of understanding had recently been signed with Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue Volunteers for provision of support at water related incidents. In addition information sharing between the Police, Fire Service and Social Services continued to grow.

57. STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE MEMBERS, AND DEPUTY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Councillor Keith Baker, Leader of the Council:

In September I provided details of the Resident Engagement program where Officers and Executive Members would go “out on the road”. These events covered five drop in sessions across the Borough and have now been completed. Between 70 and 100 residents attended the various locations and the feedback at the event, and since, has been extremely positive. In particular residents liked the way we set out the facts and figures and especially liked the initial presentation and the information boards. The information boards have proved to be a great indicator of what we do and I have asked Officers to see if we can locate them in the foyer on a permanent basis.

Residents welcomed the opportunity to engage in discussions with both Officers and Executive Members. Including the more challenging options for change prompted debate and focused minds on the scale of the challenge. Savings we have already delivered were recognised by many as an achievement. All the feedback and suggestions have been recorded and will be presented to Members in the future whilst we will also publish the findings on our website.

We will be repeating this process next year reflecting the learnings from this year including advertising them earlier and more often and finding some better locations.

Can I now move onto a couple of housekeeping matters. The post of Deputy Executive Member for Planning and Highways has become vacant. Councillor Kaiser, the Executive Member, is reviewing the profile of this post so it will remain vacant for the immediate future.

There have also been some changes in the profiles of a couple of my Executive Members. I have asked Councillor Jorgensen to take on the responsibility of oversight on the delivery of planned savings. Now I must stress this does not replace the responsibilities of any

individual Executive Member, especially the Executive Member for Finance, which is where the buck stops.

The other change is that Tenant Services, excluding the Housing Account, is moving from Councillor Kaiser, the Executive Member for Planning and Highways to the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing, Julian. Affordable housing will remain with Councillor Kaiser.

Finally, it has been brought to my attention, and this is important please, that some junior members of staff are reticent in bringing complaints about inappropriate behaviour. This is especially so if the complaint is about someone in authority. I would like to put on public record that it is vital that all such alleged transgressions are reported and investigated thoroughly. There are two mechanisms available namely "whistle blowing" or through the "Code of Conduct", both of which ensure anonymity. Members of staff should be able to go about their day to day business without any threat of abuse. As Leader I would like to say to any member of staff who find themselves in this position you have my full support in reporting it and I urge you to do just that.

Councillor Pauline Jorgensen, Executive Member for Residents' Services

A quick update on Residents' Services. We continue to work on the customer services programme and website improvements. This month we have introduced the next phase of the customer service portal which allows you to create an account and view personalised local Council information, together with the status of any faults or service requests you have raised. This facility should reduce the number of calls to chase the status, get updates, and should allow Officers to actually concentrate on fixing the problems rather than giving people updates on the latest status. We aim to further improve it over the coming months to provide more information on issues and progress, like Service Level Agreement and how long you should expect things to be resolved.

We have introduced this new self-service feature in 'quiet live' without any publicity as we wanted to work to develop it further but, despite this, in two weeks more than 250 residents have found it and created an account, 174 requests have been logged and 154 of them resolved. This has been done in a week, all by Waste Services so well done to Waste Services as well. I think it is a really good innovation. Please have a look at it, create yourself an account and it is a great way of logging calls so that they do not get lost, so please encourage everybody to use it.

We are also steadily increasing our presence on social media with almost 3,500 people following our Facebook posts (70% of them are women and 30% men) and 7,000 people follow us on Twitter: although interestingly the distribution is more male on Twitter for some reason. This helps us get our message out to the widest audience; for example the announcement of the Marvellous Festival at Dinton Pastures reached 10,500 people. It is a very wide distribution to the group that quite often are difficult for us to get to, and it is also free which is even better.

Our Trading Standards joint service have had recent success prosecuting two business for unfair trading practices and one for selling alcohol to children. They are also exceeding their performance targets for timescales for their response to complaints and also their customer satisfaction target, which I think is great news. They are also inspecting new food businesses, and all these things are very important in protecting local residents from rogue traders so I would like to thank them for all their hard work.

Councillor Julian McGhee-Sumner, Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing

I would like to share with Members four good news stories this evening;

Wokingham Borough is the first top tier authority to reduce its smoking prevalence rate to single figures. Our rate - the lowest in England is now only 9.8%, which is well ahead of every other area in the country.

CALM is the Campaign Against Living Miserably and is a ground-breaking charity working with men to prevent suicide. We are pleased that we are due to imminently launch a Calmzone Campaign with all the local authorities across the Thames Valley. Straight talking resources on men's emotional health will be distributed to licensed premises and sports clubs in the weeks running up to Christmas. The majority of suicides across Berkshire are men and suicide is the major killer for young men under the age of 40.

We are also supporting a national campaign to promote HIV Testing - including the provision of free self-sampling kits. Long gone are the days when testing for HIV meant hours-worth of gentle counselling and poor prognosis. HIV is now a treatable long-term condition but it is best to be diagnosed sooner rather than later and to gain the most from the treatments available; time is of the essence. The late HIV diagnosis rate in Wokingham Borough has thankfully fallen in the last few years.

Finally, we have had more than 175 people referred by their GP or other healthcare workers for Exercise by Referral. This is where structured physical activity, such as walking groups; dance classes; gym-based sessions or swimming are provided to people who have a range of medical conditions where outcomes will be significantly improved for the patient being more active.

Councillor John Kaiser, Executive Member for Planning and Highways

Wokingham Borough have embarked upon implementing Civil Parking Enforcement. It gives powers to the local authority to enforce parking restrictions. At the moment the restrictions are enforced by the police however this is a low priority and they apply little resource to it. This results in a large number of complaints and a great deal of inconvenience for residents due to illegal parking and abuse of parking restrictions and at times as many as 1 in 4 vehicles are parked illegally around our town centres.

At the last count, more than 93% of local authorities in the UK have undertaken CPE; that is only 23 out of 327 who have not. There is an argument that the Police are being paid to undertake parking enforcement. Therefore why should the Council do it? Regrettably we are unable to compel the Police to do anything due to lack of resources and that means that WBC lives with parking enforcement limited to the minimal provision much to the dismay of residents whose lives are blighted on a daily basis by inconsiderate and illegal parking.

When the Council take on these powers they will have to be applied across the Borough. However the Council will retain control of when, where and how it enforces. This will allow it to respond to specific problem areas and work closely with towns and parishes to determine where enforcement is needed most. Many communities will wish to tailor enforcement for their community; WBC will have a resource that could be supplemented by locally funded resources if they were required, as long as the local resource worked under the umbrella of WBC to avoid any inconsistency.

Councillor Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Executive Member for Children's Services

Firstly I thought that I would mention that we had a visit from the National Audit Office last month. They came in order to understand some of the issues facing our Early Years services and settings in the Borough and to use our feedback and evidence for a report that they will be publishing in February 2016. The topics they were interested in were: how the providers in the Borough were using the Pupil Premium money; our role in monitoring quality and data with our providers; and what does our current delivery look like for Early Years. Also how it is meeting the Government's objectives, including how many 2 year olds are taking up their entitlement; and lastly what are the risks for Early Years for example financial capacity, such as rolling out the new 30 hours of free entitlement.

We were able to demonstrate some good examples of best practice, but also highlight the very real financial difficulties that our providers are facing due to not only having the lowest basic rate payment in the country but also having high running costs such as salaries, living costs and rental for buildings. We were able to give the National Audit Office comparative data for other neighbouring authorities and this really highlighted the stark funding cost from authority to authority and shone a light on the areas of difficulty facing our services.

Sticking with education for a moment, I was also really pleased to attend the Borough's Virtual School Conference last week. It was an interesting conference with research information and new ways of working showcased. Schools are being supported to help our children in care and also adoptees and those in receipt of Free School Meals to enable them to achieve. Our new Virtual School is starting to show how it can really impact the lives of our most vulnerable children and to support them through their education, access to extra-curricular activities and go on to further education and eventually work.

Less than two weeks ago many of us also came together to celebrate all of our children in care and care leavers achievements at their annual awards day. Thank you to those who came. I would like to personally thank our social workers, our foster carers, Officers, you know who you are, and Corporate Parents who came along as well, for their commitment and for being there to celebrate what our young people have been up to over the last 12 months and hear about the amazing things that our foster carers have also been doing to care for our most vulnerable children.

As Corporate Parents, I would like to share with you all some of the most amazing things that they have been doing in the last 12 months: There were: Duke of Edinburgh's awards; prizes for learning to swim; learning to crawl; song writing; having a first book published, which is amazing, 100% attendance at school, that was 2 years in a row so that is fantastic; great GCSE results; you name it, they were amazing awards.

I chatted to some of our new foster carers as well and it was truly inspiring. They have been doing so much in just the last few months. They have been taking on new family members, guiding foster children into new schools, and being there to support care leavers as well in becoming independent adults and gaining their first job or college places. Their commitment to our children is remarkable and I spoke to one new carer and she is a teacher and has given up her job to take on this role and the dedication of this individual helping that particular child in getting it right for his future is absolutely stunning.

Lastly, I just wanted to mention that on Sunday 1st November I was delighted to be part of launching Home for Good in our Borough. Home for Good is a national charity and their ethos is to raise awareness that there are children waiting to be adopted, and that there is

a desperate need for more foster places. They are now working in partnership with us and the faith community in our Borough to help us find 20 new foster placements. The launch took place at the Kings Church in Wokingham. There was a huge turnout and a wonderfully warm reception for us there and I hope you will all carry on and promote this work.

Councillor Anthony Pollock, Executive Member for Economic Development and Finance

I would first of all like to echo Keith's comments on the public participatory budgeting process which I think was very successful and I think we will do it even better next year.

As all of you will be aware, next week the Chancellor George Osborne will be announcing his public spending review and this will no doubt have an impact on proposed spending in Local Government. We have already taken into account expected reductions in Central Government grant over the life of this parliament in our budget planning but with the set back to his tax credit changes and possible extra spending required in health and defence we may see additional cuts to local authority budgets. However being the lowest funded unitary authority in the country we have the advantage that they can only take away what little we have once and we are getting close to the point where there will be no more revenue support grant to take away. Following the local government settlement I expect that we will be receiving the information in connection with our 2016/2017 settlement, which I would expect to receive somewhere between mid-December and early January, depending on how difficult it is or how difficult the Chancellor has made it for the relevant Government department to calculate it. The more money he has taken away from everyone that they did not expect obviously the later the settlement will be announced.

A number of you will be aware that George Osborne made some announcements about business rates. Now that might surprise some of you who will know that a couple of years ago business rates were localised and he seems to be reannouncing it. However, we are not quite sure what the new regime is going to be, the devil is always in the detail but I think looking at the last localism scheme, the key piece was that there was to be no winners and losers and therefore with tariffs and levies the relevant amounts were equalised across councils so that everyone actually remains the same. I would expect that probably the same thing is going to happen again so please do not get your hopes up that we are going to suddenly have a large dollop of extra money to spend.

Councillor Philip Mirfin, Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities,

First of all an update on Regeneration. The planning application documents are now being finalised for the Elms Field proposals and following extensive consultation with residents, stakeholders and Members the plan is to submit these by the end of November. Ahead of the submission we will be previewing the application details with various stakeholder groups. Once the application has been registered it will be available to view and local people will be able to see just how we have changed the proposals in response to local comments such as the desire to retain more of the open space, the existing mature trees, as well as the inclusion of the new three screen boutique cinema. As with our earlier regeneration planning applications we have requested that the Local Planning Authority extend the consultation period to give residents longer to respond with their comments, and in addition to being able to view the full set of application documents here at Shute End and on the Council's website, residents will also be able to see the key documents at Wokingham Library and at Wokingham Town Hall. The joint Town and Borough Council workshop held at the Wokingham Town Hall on Monday this week was very well attended by residents groups, along with Borough and Town Members, all who had been asked to

join in the design discussions on the Market Place and the new square to be built in Peach Place. The outcomes for these will be published in due course, but a wide consensus emerged.

Moving on to the community roundup. Shinfield: October saw the re-launch of the public IT access to two desk-top computers at the Community Flat there. In addition to helping those people who are already using facilities print CVs, we are also linking with Housing and Benefits to ensure access for residents using systems such as Job Match and Universal Credit.

In Norreys, the Community Development Worker vacancy has now been filled. The new Community Development Officer has been appointed to the Norreys area and started in fact last Monday. Prior to the appointment, the wider team offered their support to core activities, alongside community volunteers and other local partners.

At Rainbow Park, the facelift for the Community Centre has gone forward: The grills have been removed from the windows and we hope the building now looks more inviting and will encourage new community members to come and see what is happening. We are also working on a number of PR avenues to develop a more positive perception of the area, including the Parish magazines and Borough News.

At Gorse Ride, the Community Development Worker has been experimenting with the opening hours of the Community House to enable people who work to access the facility and our worker on Wednesday evenings. Membership of the Women's Group is growing there and this group continue to develop ideas and organise activities to benefit the wider community, including plans for a children's Christmas party.

In Woodley, our Community Development Worker is working with existing volunteers to find a way of reinvigorating the South East Woodley Community Association and attracting new members.

Councillor Mark Ashwell, Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities

My part of the portfolio is two-fold: Voluntary and Community and also Corporate Assets. Whilst they might seem miles apart they overlap in all sorts of ways.

Voluntary and Community: I have spent my time reviewing the impact of our funding and I have established our investments are making the most impact for our residents. Of course you then just cannot help getting involved and I have joined in things like interview training at The Crescent Centre Lower Earley, what a wonderful place that is, and Wokingham Mencap's 'Walking in their Shoes' with Bev from Winnersh who is carer for her daughter Bonnie.

Thank you Mr Mayor for your recent Reception for the Voluntary Sector; the 40 or so organisations who attended were chuffed to be recognised and spend some quality time with each other. Thank you for that.

Corporate Assets: I remind Council that we are now nearly half way through our asset review of our £650 million pounds worth of Borough Assets. This with a view of identifying assets to potentially transfer to our community. With this in mind we are also working up a model that we can use to transfer those assets to our Towns, Parishes and Community organisations. This is to help facilitate the localism to which we all strive. I chair the

Assets Review Programme Board which is now meeting once a month to consider prospects as they surface. Please be assured that Ward Members will be fully consulted and be instrumental to every opportunity in their own Ward. So Mr Mayor Voluntary, Community and Corporate Assets are collaborating to make Wokingham Borough an even better place to live and do business.

58. STATEMENT FROM COUNCIL OWNED COMPANIES

Councillor Anthony Pollock, Non-Executive Director Optalis Limited

In my capacity as Chairman of Optalis there are a number of items that I would like to bring to your attention.

Four Optalis members of staff have been shortlisted for national awards. One of our social workers has been short listed for the Social Worker of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award for her career long contribution both to social work in the UK and to voluntary social work and charitable work in India with people with visual impairments. Three other members of staff have been shortlisted for National Care Awards under different categories and these are: the Innovator Award; the Care Trainer Award; and the Ancillary Worker Award. The regional award ceremony will be held on 3rd December. I am very proud that we have been so successful in having four members of the Optalis staff nominated for these awards and it is a tribute to the leadership of this company that such achievements are being recognised.

We continue to develop our business by tendering for work outside Wokingham Borough and currently are speaking to neighbouring Unitary and County Councils. I am pleased with the new business we have won this year and want to pay tribute to the staff since we are ahead of budget on the new business won.

I want to pay particular tribute to a new service which we call "Step Up Step Down." This service provides a half-way house between home and hospital. This facility supports acute services such as the Royal Berkshire Hospital seeking to send home those who are not sick enough to remain in hospital but for whom there are needs for care packages to be arranged before the individuals can return home and for GPs who can use this facility to provide treatment or additional care in a non-hospital environment, which is more suitable to the needs of the individual. This new service is a contribution to reducing what is commonly known as bed blocking and I am very pleased with the positive contribution that Optalis is making this new service.

Councillor Gary Cowan, Non-Executive Director Loddon Homes Limited

As Councillor David Chopping advised at the last Council meeting, the detailed application to register Loddon Homes Limited as a For-Profit Registered Provider, which in simple terms is a Housing Association, was submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency at the beginning of September. This has been the subject of follow-up questions, some of which are quite complex, and will require careful consideration. The main thrust of the questioning is, as expected, over the governance, independence and financial future of Loddon Homes, as funded through either commuted sums, or from Council funds channelled through Wokingham Housing Limited. Our managing director Bill Flood was also invited to discuss the application at the Homes and Communities Agency, recently, and found the meeting very fruitful.

We have continued the separation of the two companies, with individual board meetings now started, rather than the joint boards we held before. However, there will be joint

management meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest, which will take place monthly. The Board of Loddon Homes Limited is now complete, with the inclusion of Lionel Haynes, who has just retired as the financial director of a Housing Association.

We are trying to monitor this fast moving world, resulting from the “policy suggestions” forming part of the new Government’s Housing Bill, as it progresses through Parliament. Our latest advice from our “man-in-the-know”, Dave Williams just after he left the latest ‘Chatham House rules’ HCA briefing is that the policy we are following of keeping our options open as we seek to register Loddon Homes Limited, is still the best way forward.

I will keep the Council informed as the application progresses.

Councillor David Chopping, Non-Executive Director of Wokingham Housing Limited
To reiterate the differences between the two Housing Companies. WHL or Wokingham Housing Limited is the Council’s housing development company, Loddon Homes is the first of its subsidiaries, and will be the property management company specifically looking after the future affordable/social housing portfolio.

For Council’s information we have decided to form a further subsidiary, probably to be known as Emmbrook Property Limited. This is a financial management vehicle, and should allow savings on VAT. The Directors will be the same as WHL, possibly including Gary if he is a good boy, but will not involve fees and charges apart from our own accountancy costs.

Phoenix, that is Eustace that was, the contractors are now on site. An unexpected problem has arisen that will have an impact on the capital budget, in that the demolition of the old flats left an excess of debris. This will not substantially delay the timescales of the build contract, but has added additional project costs that were not expected as further clearance is carried out prior to actual building works starting. In real terms it is adding about four weeks net to the real start time.

Fosters is progressing, the specifications have been sent out to seven contractors so they can quote for the building works. Tenders will be received in a few weeks and we will keep you informed.

On the half dozen smaller sites, where we are seeking to obtain planning approval, matters are progressing steadily and we hope to have all our potential current pipeline sites either with full planning permission or applications made, by Spring next year. Our latest application on the Norton Road site was of course approved last week so thank you very much to the Planning Committee.

I did say at last Council that “our staffing is now complete”, well it is, but with a further change as Derek Thurgood nears the end of his fixed term contract, we have found a replacement, Holly Morris, so we move steadily towards full equal opportunity.

I did say also that the business plan was moving ahead and is now reaching the final draft stages, and has been submitted to Holdco. We are considering a company-wide PRP arrangement, but that is long term. We also started the branding exercise last Tuesday for logos and websites, to give all three companies more identifiable corporate identities, always an easy way to spend money, but we have identified exactly what we want to achieve, and we are working from a fixed budget. That is basically where we are at the moment and hopefully another update at the next meeting.

59. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

59.1 UllaKarin Clark asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

The Emmbrook Secondary School plays a vital role in the education of children in the area. Can the Member inform me of the investments made by this Council in the school over the last four years, and whether any new investments are planned and when?

Answer

Since the 2011/12 financial year the Council has spent £3,028,852 on capital works on the Emmbrook school site. The most significant project costing £2million has been the replacement of a block of temporary classrooms with a new English and drama block, providing state of the art teaching and staff facilities. The Council plans to spend £3million over the next two years replacing a suite of temporary accommodation with a new fit for purpose block for the school's maths department. The bulk of the balance of spend has been on routine maintenance, including £500,000 re-roofing a major part of the school and upgrading and renewing the heating and electrical plant.

Supplementary Question

Supporting all children to achieve their full potential is a key priority for Wokingham Borough Council. Can the Member advise me of the work we as a Council are doing to support all the children at Emmbrook School to enable them to succeed?

Supplementary Answer

We have made great progress this year through our Virtual School, and I spoke about it earlier, in effectively meeting the needs of our children who are most at risk of not achieving and in particular those children who are in care. We are working closely with school staff and the senior team at Emmbrook School, including the designated teacher for Looked After Children and we have set out clear action plans and support through personal education plans. These are for our children in care. These are starting to make a real difference for each child. Emmbrook School has been exemplary in being flexible and accommodating to meet each individual child's needs.

59.2 Alison Swaddle asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Following Council's approval of the move to Civil Parking Enforcement in Wokingham Borough, can the Member explain what impact CPE will have on tackling parking on grass verges and footpaths?

Answer

Following the Executive approval to proceed with implementing civil parking enforcement in October Officers are now undertaking the work to submit an application to take on these powers. However it will be up to 18 months before the Borough is able to enforce parking restrictions and in the meantime the Police remain the enforcement agency for parking.

In the main where parking restrictions are in place they apply both to footways and the verges as well and so we would be able to enforce infringements on verges and footways. Verges and footway parking is a problem in a number of places across the Borough. Each

case is different and often there are conflicting demands from local residents and so it is important that when something is done it is done with the full cooperation of the local residents. This is the approach set out in the recently adopted working paper for verge parking and we are happy to work with residents to try to find solutions to these issues, resources permitting.

Supplementary Question

May I ask why does the process take 18 months at least?

Supplementary Answer

We need to review all the traffic orders to make sure they are fit for purpose and at the same time we have to make sure all the road signs and markings relating to parking are clear and unambiguous. Once we have done that we then have to submit the application to the Secretary of State for his approval.

59.3 Pauline Helliar-Symons asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Can the Member explain the impact of the consultation from the beginning of this year on the Council's proposed Local Planning Enforcement Plan?

Answer

Consultation on the Local Planning Enforcement Plan took place with Members, Town and Parish Councils and the public early this year. A number of responses were received and the document was amended to reflect many of the comments made. The final document was adopted by the Council's Executive in June 2015.

The Council has taken huge steps to improve its Planning Enforcement service over the last year or so. These improvements have resulted from changes in the Council's approach to planning enforcement and its policies and procedures. These reflect the recommendations of the service review by John Silvester in 2013 and the Local Planning Enforcement Plan which sets out this new approach.

The Council has made significant progress recently and this has been recognised by planning specialists and professionals nationally. The service has been successful in taking enforcement action and defending this at appeal and in the courts. Last year, believe it or not, this Council served three times more enforcement notices than the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council and twice as many as Slough Borough Council. A significant contribution to the success has been the additional resource within the planning enforcement service and I am strongly committed to ensure that this service improvement continues in the future.

Supplementary Question

Further to that answer, can the Member tell me what have been the most successful ways that we have consulted with and between local residents and whether there can be any further steps the Council can take to improve that communication and so prevent breaches in planning regulations?

Supplementary Answer

I think one of the most successful aspects in the future, which is what we have done where there has been a breach, and a Member or a Parish Council has reported that breach, we have actually gone back and told them what the outcome is rather than just close the breach down. Out of the 700 odd breaches that we get each year, something like about

15-20% are actual breaches, the rest of them are not, so it means that there is a lot of stuff. People do not really understand planning law and there is a lot of stuff which are not actual breaches. What we do now is we go back to Members and Parish Councils and we tell them that we are minded to close the breach unless they want to make any more comment because sometimes there is local knowledge that is not always available to the Planning Officer or the Enforcement Officer.

59.4 Guy Grandison asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

In June, Birmingham County Court granted an injunction to two business owners in Bromsgrove that means that any traveller incursions onto their land could lead to those individuals placing a caravan on that site being fined, or even jailed. Does the Member welcome this landmark ruling by the Court?

Answer

The case was one brought by private individuals in their capacity as landowners against traveller incursions. This is not a landmark ruling and other landowners have been successful securing injunctions in such cases. For example, in its capacity as landowner, Reading Borough Council served an injunction against incursions on land in its ownership.

There is an ability to secure an injunction under planning legislation against any actual or apprehended breach of planning control that would occur from a gypsy and traveller incursion on land in the authorities administrative area. However, to be successful, it is critical that there is evidence that the breach has or is even likely to occur. WBC has been successful in securing such injunctions at Highfield Park and Blagrove Lane in respect of Gypsy and Traveller incursions in the past.

Supplementary Question

Could you describe any more local impacts of this ruling?

Supplementary Answer

Because it is not a landmark case it really does not impact on what we do. We have a pretty good procedure when it comes to dealing with Gypsy incursions. The problem comes when the Gypsies own the land or the people who own the land are not happy to go forward with an injunction. We have a situation such as that at the moment, which is coming up for appeal. I think we are pretty good with dealing with this in the main.

59.5 Dianne King asked the Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities the following question:

Does the Member agree that it is vital that we resolve the issue of parking in Wokingham town centre in order to ensure that the multi-million pound regeneration is a success?

Answer

Providing sufficient high quality car parking remains and has been an important consideration for the town centre regeneration throughout the process. Our schemes are set to deliver just such facilities for Wokingham over the coming years, including the new multi storey car park set to be built next year on the site of the Carnival Pool.

The Regeneration Team has worked closely with the Highways Department throughout this process to ensure that the right parking is delivered at the right locations to ensure not just the success of our regeneration developments, but the success of the whole town as a place for business, leisure and for living.

Maintaining an excellent range of parking facilities across the town is essential in order that it remains a desirable destination and a thriving centre. To this end the Council's Highways Team have monitored the use of existing parking and modelled the likely demand as the town grows and regeneration takes shape. The Council is confident that the proposals for parking across the town will provide more than adequate facilities and support the long term future of the town.

This needs to be seen in light of the paper brought to the Council's Executive in June of this year where Highways set out a vision for travel to the town. Whilst the majority of people will continue to drive into town we know there is a demand from people for better walking, cycling and public transport facilities and plans for the town address all of these.

59.6 Ken Miall asked the Executive Member for Resident Services the following question:

Can the Member tell me how far has fibre-optic broadband been rolled out across the Borough?

Answer

This question falls neatly between my portfolio of Resident Services and Anthony's of Economic Development, so I will have a go at answering and Anthony may want to chip in with anything else he might like to add.

Phase 1 of the Superfast Berkshire Programme is due to complete at the end of 2015 by which time more than 92% of Wokingham Borough's homes and businesses are expected to have access to fibre broadband. Wokingham has seen upgrades for faster broadband in Arborfield, Lower Earley, Winnersh, Woodley and Wargrave. To date this has seen 13 cabinets go live reaching 2,350 properties and businesses previously beyond the reach of fast broadband.

By the end of the programme it is anticipated that that 2,443 properties and businesses will have access to fast broadband which will have benefited 6,107 residents, give or take a few. Wokingham's share of the cost of Phase 1 is £218,000 which has been matched funded by Broadband Delivery UK, the Government body which oversees the programme.

In addition Wokingham has allocated £243,000 for Phase 2 of the programme called Superfast Extension Programme or SEP. Additional funding has been set aside to cover Wokingham's contribution to the management of the project which is run by West Berkshire Council. It is estimated that SEP will extend coverage up to 97%. Discussions are currently ongoing with a potential supplier and the Government body Broadband Delivery UK, to see how this can be rolled out across Wokingham Borough. It is anticipated that an announcement will be made in a few months. The SEP is estimated to provide coverage to a further 3,500 homes which could again provide access to about another 8,750 residents.

59.7 Chris Smith asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Does the Leader believe the current situation where an independent panel sets the rate of allowances for Councillors in Wokingham Borough is preferable?

Answer

Yes, I do. And, in fact, this Council, like all Councils, are required to do so by legislation.

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 require local authorities to make a scheme of allowances for their Members and to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations to the Council about the scheme and the amounts to be paid.

At the last meeting of the Council, Councillors received the recommendations of the Panel. Councillors heard directly from the Chairman of the Panel as he set out the rationale for the Panel's recommendations. He was clear that these recommendations including the rate of allowances for Councillors had been arrived at independently of Councillors.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the final decision whether to accept the recommendations rests with the Council, I absolutely would support the current process in terms of its transparency and independence. I would like to point out that not always do the Independent Panel recommend increases. In fact the Special Responsibility Allowance I think has not been raised for about three or four years, so it is not all additional money.

Supplementary Question

Do you think that voting against the Panel's recommendations gives the impression that some councillors would rather continue increasing their own pay whenever they felt like it?

Supplementary Answer

That is a difficult one because it really is down to each individual Member to decide what they wish to do. We all spend a huge amount of time either as an Ward Member or as a appointed position and it does require a certain amount of money to compensate for that time. In answer to your supplementary it really is down to the individual to decide what they wish to do.

59.8 Mark Ashwell asked the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing the following question:

Can the Member explain what steps the Council is taking to tackle childhood obesity in Wokingham Borough?

Answer

That is one of those questions which straddles my portfolio and also that of Charlotte Haitham Taylor so if I say anything incorrect no doubt Charlotte will pick me up on it.

The National Child Measurement Programme or NCMP was established by the Department of Health in 2005 to routinely weigh and measure the height of children beginning school in reception class, that is aged 4–5 years, and at Year 6, aged 10–11 years at the end of primary education, at all state-funded primary schools. The findings from the NCMP are used to gather population surveillance data and to inform local planning of services for children and young people. Local Government took control of commissioning the NCMP in April 2013. The results for Wokingham Borough children show that rates of childhood overweight and obesity are significantly lower than the England levels, and the trend of obesity in Year 6 reducing whereas nationally it is increasing. However, we are keeping this under review and it will be reported on at periodic times.

59.9 Bill Soane asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Along with Town and Parish Councils this Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant. This states that we have a moral obligation to members of the armed forces and their families, aiming to prevent those who serve, or have served, facing disadvantage in their

access to services, and that injured service men and women and bereaved families receive special consideration. I ask what steps are taken by this Council to ensure that these obligations are being observed and acted upon?

Answer

The Armed Forces Community Covenants set out practical ways in which statutory and non-statutory agencies across the community (local authorities, health organisations, business community, and voluntary/community sector) so they can work together with armed forces representatives to give their support locally to integrating the Armed Forces into the wider community.

The Wokingham Borough Armed Forces Community Covenant was signed in July 2013 by Wokingham Borough Council, representatives from Arborfield Garrison, Arborfield and Newland Parish Council, Shinfield Parish Council, Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Chamber of Commerce.

An action plan for delivering improvements within the spirit of the covenant has been developed and includes the following specific elements:

- Housing
- Health and Wellbeing
- Education and Children and Young People
- Employment
- Welfare/ Advice/ Information and Integration
- Recognise and remember
- Future Developments

The actions to date include:

- The Arborfield Garrison HQ has been in contact with Arborfield and Newland Parish Council and has agreed to open the Garrison Youth Club to the wider Arborfield Parish Community.
- Community 'Homefront Meetings' are being held approximately every 3 months with representation from Arborfield and Newland Parish Council, Wokingham Borough Council and Thames Valley Police along with various representatives from the military community.
- Adult Community Learning courses delivered in Arborfield including courses for army wives from Nepal that combined cultural and English language learning.
- Wokingham Borough Council supported the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst Business Networking Event in January 2014 which aimed to promote the benefits of employing former service men and women in local businesses.
- World War One centenary commemoration events were held through the Borough with Wokingham Town Council leading and coordinating activities including a 'Wokingham Remembers' Heritage Trail linking the memorials within the Borough and providing pop-up mobile exhibition stands that tell the stories of some of the local men who fought in the war.
- The Arborfield Garrison planning application was accompanied by a Heritage Statement to explain how the proposals take account of the significant military heritage of the site.

- Extensive community engagement work coordinated by Thames Valley Police and Wokingham Borough Council took place following the tragic murder of the wife of a Gurkha soldier, in June 2013.

The progress in delivering these actions has also been considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and further updates will be provided in the future to monitor progress.

59.10 Philip Houldsworth asked the Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities the following question:

The Regeneration of the Wokingham Town Centre represents a significant investment. Does the Executive Member for Regeneration share my view that providing a safe environment for shoppers and families will be vital for its success? If so will he ensure that there will be in place a scheme for the pedestrianisation of Peach Street and the Market Place during shopping hours?

Answer

The current plans for regeneration do not include for the pedestrianisation of Peach Street or Denmark Street. We do have plans for a revitalised Market Place and this will lead to an improved environment for all visitors to Wokingham Town Centre.

Peach Street and Denmark Street are busy vehicle routes and restricting traffic movements on them would be difficult to achieve without a suitable alternative route. Potentially the plans for a south Wokingham distributor road will provide this route and that is something that could be looked at in more detail in the near future.

60. MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND WARD MATTERS

60.1 Tom McCann asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

At the last meeting I raised a question about how someone who had been a victim of historical abuse could contact the Council. I want to thank all Members who have contacted me offering me their help should I need it to help anyone who felt that they needed my help. To my knowledge this was not the case but I thank you for your offer of help and concern. The reason I raised the question was because I was made aware that this Council was thinking of starting up and opening up a Child Line like help facility for any child or person who felt abused in the past. This would appear not to be the case. I would like to ask other than what we currently do, what else are we likely to do in the near future should we have any children who feel that they may want to use this service?

Answer

The last time you asked this question you were not very specific and again you have been a little bit woolly. Hotlines are set up throughout the country for very specific reasons and very specific circumstances as well and without having a particular reason to do so this Council would not set up a hotline. It is on a needs basis to do something like that. If there is information that we have, that is presented to us, in order for us to do something like that then of course we would act on it and when the information comes into a hotline then all of that information is disseminated and then passed on to the relevant authorities whether that be the Police or the Council to then act upon. This Council already has really well established routes which are very well recognised within the community: routes for people to contact the Council raising concerns; and also routes through to the Police as well. I hope that anyone with concerns would use those methods already out there. Our

key contact details are on the website, readily available for people to use. We have our normal hours but also we have an Out of Hours service as well and this is very effective. I have had an opportunity to use it in the past under circumstances which were necessary and it is effective and it does work. All of our calls are dealt with by professional people who are trained at the end of the telephone as well so people can ring in with confidence and their calls are treated in a confidential manner as well. I want to reassure people that we have facilities out there and they are dealt with professionally and I feel that we are already offering these services out there and should we need to set something up that is different to that then we would if the circumstances arose. I know that you have approached the Director of Children's Services and also the Chief Executive for a 1:1 meeting and if you have very specific concerns that you are not raising tonight then I hope that they will be able to offer further advice.

60.2 Tim Holton asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

There has been some recent work carried out in Thistleton Way. The tarmac and concrete rubble was temporarily stored on a grass verge some 300 yards away across Rushey Way at the entrance to Mill Lane. This caused concern to the residents firstly as it appeared to be fly-tipping and secondly when it was being deposited and collected the road was closed for up to 20 minutes with no advance warning. Please can the Executive Member for Highways reassure myself and the residents that this site will not become a dumping ground for works further afield and that when such a site is chosen residents and Ward Members are informed?

Answer

This issue in question arises when a contractor asks to use an area of the highways and most commonly its verge to temporarily store materials while they undertake work on the road. Many highways work sites are constrained and storing spoil on them is either impossible or would lead to worksites being much bigger thus potentially adding to traffic delays. Temporary spoil sites can also reduce lorry movements close to the site and provide local storage for the materials that are going to be reused once the excavation needs to be backfilled.

We do not want to place a blanket stop on this practice as it reduces congestion and work costs, both of which benefit the residents. However, we will now ensure that where a temporary site is being used local Members and residents will be made aware of their use and how long that material will be on site. There is a requirement for the sites to be made good after the material has been removed but this is often difficult due to the type of site and the use of it. Whilst we endeavour to ensure contractors do everything they can to make good the temporary site upon completion of the work, it will need a reasonable period of time for it to be restored. You are right, it is important to let local residents know and when this arrangement is being used. I was a bit surprised to realise that we were not doing this. I have spoken to the Street Works Team and in future what we have told the utility companies to do is undertake a letter drop and I have also asked that there will be a sign left on the spoil heap which actually gives contact telephone numbers as well.

60.3 Prue Bray asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Last week the M4 Smart Motorway Inquiry had a number of site visits in Winnersh, in Earley and in Shinfield and this week the inquiry has sat through some days, and as Members will be aware the issue of the M4 particularly noise and also air pollution and safety are of cross party concern. Norman Jorgensen has certainly been attending some

of the site visits, not all of them but was part of the Inquiry and Clive Jones, the Liberal Democrat candidate at the last election has also been present so there is a cross party representation from Members or politicians. Nearly all of the Councils along the line of the effected part of the motorway from Junction 3 to Junction 12 have sent teams to the hearings or held meetings with the Inspector or at least agreed a statement of common ground but Wokingham does not appear to have done so. Could you please explain why the Council unlike most of the other Councils has not been fully engaged in the Inquiry, pushing for noise mitigation on behalf of our Borough residents?

Answer

We have met with Highways England, Officers and myself and we have been in correspondence with regards to a statement of common ground and tomorrow our submission will become available. The statement sets out how we believe the proposed scheme makes adequate provision in terms of transport and highways noise, archaeology and heritage assets, flood risk and drainage, ecologically and air quality, trees and landscape. In addition and in negotiation with Highways England Officers, we have agreed that they will install additional noise barriers within the Wokingham section and replacement barriers for elsewhere if they are in poor condition in order to mitigate any noise impact.

60.4 Lindsay Ferris asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

On behalf of residents in my ward can you please tell me why Councillor John Halsall has been removed/replaced as Deputy Executive Member for Highways?

Answer

It is not really a ward matter but I will answer that. We make changes to our administration all the time. The rationale for that is private and personal and not really relevant to this particular meeting.

60.5 Guy Grandison asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Could you give me an update on the rebuild of Meldreth Way roundabout and the Meldreth Way cycle route?

Answer

I am advised that the resources to complete the Meldreth Way roundabout are now aligned with the cycle route in Meldreth Way as we split the gang to do both sites. They have a completion date which is 9 December and it is expected that all the work will be completed. We will have had a walkover and undertaken any snagged items and it will all be corrected satisfactorily by that date.

60.6 Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

If you do not close the roundabout on the Reading Road for the Northern Distributor Road or the Winnersh relief road but have a different set of junctions instead, the savings could be enough to fund the Council's part of the Winnersh relief road and distributed at the same time as the Northern Distributor Road, why do you not do that, rather than create a twin roundabout underpass by the M4 motorway bridge and the world's largest tailback along the Reading Road to Wokingham?

Answer

As you know Rachelle, we are in the process of really looking at the alignment at the moment and the engineering and there is nothing firmed up on that but I would welcome your input into that. I guess it is the difference about talking about things and doing them.

60.7 Philip Houldsworth asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Will the Executive Member for Highways and Planning join me and the residents of Winnersh in welcoming the publication of the timetable for the construction of the entire Winnersh relief road? We look forward to its opening in February 2018 when the 30 year wait will end.

Answer

Better late than never but again it is about doing it rather than just talking about it.

60.8 Norman Jorgensen asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

I can confirm I was at the hearings this week both at the open floor hearing on Monday evening, the environment hearing on Tuesday and Wednesday and the road safety hearing which followed on Wednesday. The Council's that were represented at that were Bucks Country Council, South Bucks District Council, Slough Council and Hillingdon. There were no other councils from the stretch of the M4 present. This week I have spoken up for more noise mitigation and on local traffic issues at these hearings held by the Planning Inspectorate which is currently examining the proposed scheme. I am pleased to say that during the hearings Highways England did say that they were currently working up an enhanced noise mitigation strategy and the implication is that they will be coming forward with more noise mitigation measures and that will be available in about three weeks' time so we look forward to seeing that. On 19 March this year this Council passed the Motion that I brought forward asking Highways England to include further noise mitigation measures as part of this scheme so it is good that they are acting on that but John please will you tell me what this Council has been doing since that Motion regarding the Highways England proposal for the four lane running on the M4?

Answer

I and the Officers, as I said earlier, have met with Highways England and tomorrow you will see our submission which will set out our statement of common ground and I can assure you Norman, when you see it you will see just how much work the Council has been doing behind the scenes. It is always a problem when you are acting as a statutory consultee because you do have your arms tied to a certain degree. What I will be asking for tomorrow when I write to all Members will be their comments which will go into the supplementary letter which will accompany our technical submission.

61. MOTIONS

61.1 Motion 373 submitted by Tim Holton

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Tim Holton and seconded by Councillor Alistair Auty.

'This Council welcomes the results of reports that have found that Wokingham and Earley are the two of best places to live in England and Wales. Earley was ranked fifth and one of the safest towns in the country, whilst Wokingham was ranked the best place in the country to live and raise a family. This Council will continue to support our towns and

communities so that Wokingham Borough continues to be one of the best places to live and work in the UK.'

Following debate, upon being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

RESOLVED: That this Council welcomes the results of reports that have found that Wokingham and Earley are the two of best places to live in England and Wales. Earley was ranked fifth and one of the safest towns in the country, whilst Wokingham was ranked the best place in the country to live and raise a family. This Council will continue to support our towns and communities so that Wokingham Borough continues to be one of the best places to live and work in the UK.

61.2 Motion 374 submitted by Gary Cowan

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Gary Cowan and seconded by Councillor Rob Stanton.

'This Council notes with concern the findings of the Bracknell News regarding the significant levels of speeding on Barkham Road near Tavistock Mews. This Council will continue to support the police in addressing speeding in this area and across the Borough, and will take steps where necessary to tackle the problem of dangerous and reckless driving. In addition, this Council will continue to raise awareness of the potential harm to pedestrians due to accidents caused by exceeding the speed limit, and the impact on the lives of individuals and families.'

Following debate, upon being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

RESOLVED: That this Council notes with concern the findings of the Bracknell News regarding the significant levels of speeding on Barkham Road near Tavistock Mews. This Council will continue to support the police in addressing speeding in this area and across the Borough, and will take steps where necessary to tackle the problem of dangerous and reckless driving. In addition, this Council will continue to raise awareness of the potential harm to pedestrians due to accidents caused by exceeding the speed limit, and the impact on the lives of individuals and families.

61.3 Motion 375 submitted by John Halsall

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor John Halsall and seconded by seconded by Councillor Anthony Pollock.

'Wokingham Borough has the highest per capita vehicular density in the country. The Council recognises that issues with roads affect not just one ward but every motorist. Given the paucity of funds we have to devote to road repair and maintenance, we allocate the budget on the bases of safety, the condition of the roads and their usage. We give priority to the major trunk roads so that users can get to work, children to school and the economy continues by keeping the traffic moving.'

It was proposed by Councillor Tom McCann and seconded by Councillor Prue Bray that the Motion be amended as follows:

'Wokingham Borough has the highest per capita vehicular density in the country. The Council recognises that issues with roads affect not just one ward but every motorist.

Given the paucity of funds we have to devote to road repair and maintenance, we allocate the budget on the bases of safety, the condition of the roads and their usage. We give priority to ~~the major trunk roads~~ **primary routes**, so that users can get to work, children to school and the economy continues by keeping the traffic moving.

ADEPT, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport and RSTA the Road Surface Treatments Association recommend the maximum average service life is 15 years for surfacing. Therefore this Council aspires to renew all road surfaces in the Borough within a 30 year period in a rolling program of replacement.'

Following debate upon being put to the meeting the amendment to the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be lost.

In accordance with 4.2.12 h) of the Council's Constitution Councillor John Halsall requested to alter his original Motion as follows:

'Wokingham Borough has the highest per capita vehicular density in the country. The Council recognises that issues with roads affect not just one ward but every motorist. Given the paucity of funds we have to devote to road repair and maintenance, we allocate the budget on the bases of safety, the condition of the roads and their usage. We give priority to ~~the major trunk roads~~ **primary routes** so that users can get to work, children to school and the economy continues by keeping the traffic moving.'

Upon being put to the meeting the altered Motion was accepted as the substantive Motion.

62. CONTINUATION OF THE MEETING

At this point in the meeting 10.15pm, in accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.12 (m), Council considered a Motion to continue the meeting beyond 10.30pm for a maximum of 30 minutes to enable further business on the Agenda to be transacted. This was proposed by Councillor Nick Ray and seconded by Councillor Nicky Jerrome.

Upon being put to the meeting, the Motion was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

63. NOTICE OF MOTION 375 CONTINUED

Following debate, upon being put to the meeting, the substantive Motion was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

RESOLVED: That Wokingham Borough has the highest per capita vehicular density in the country. The Council recognises that issues with roads affect not just one ward but every motorist. Given the paucity of funds we have to devote to road repair and maintenance, we allocate the budget on the bases of safety, the condition of the roads and their usage. We give priority to roads primary routes so that users can get to work, children to school and the economy continues by keeping the traffic moving.

63.1 Motion 376 submitted by Nicky Jerrome

The Council considered the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Nicky Jerrome and seconded by Councillor Nick Ray.

'This Council notes:

- 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in any given year.

- The World Health Organisation predicts that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020.
- Mental ill health costs some £105 billion each year in England alone.
- People with a severe mental illness die up to 20 years younger than their peers in the UK.
- There is often a circular relationship between mental health and issues such as housing, employment, family problems or debt.

This Council believes:

- As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health.
- Mental health should be a priority across all the local authority's areas of responsibility, including housing, community safety and planning.
- All councillors, whether members of the Executive or Scrutiny and in our community and casework roles, can play a positive role in championing mental health on an individual and strategic basis.

This Council resolves:

- To sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.
- We commit to appoint an elected Member as 'mental health champion' across the Council.
- We will seek to identify a member of staff within the council to act as 'lead officer' for mental health

The Council will also:

1. Support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces
2. Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community
3. Work with local partners to offer effective support for people with mental health needs
4. Tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community
5. Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.'

It was proposed by Councillor Julian McGhee-Sumner and seconded by Councillor Charlotte Haitham Taylor that the Motion be amended as follows:

'This Council notes:- 1 in 4 people will experience some form of mental health problem in their lifetime. Despite improvements in services and greater understanding of mental health conditions, there remains a stigma around mental health, which has endured, along with physical health inequalities - those with severe and enduring mental illness may die up to 20 years younger than their peers. As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health.'

Adult mental health services in Wokingham, provided by the council in partnership with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, are in good shape, performing well above the national average on a range of indicators. Nevertheless Wokingham residents experiencing mental ill health face many of the same challenges caused by stigma and health inequality – poor physical health, unemployment, isolation and even homelessness.

All Councillors can play a positive role in championing mental health.

This Council resolves:-

That each and every Councillor will champion the cause of mental health inequality in their elected Member role by positively challenging mental health discrimination and by ensuring that in all of their work as an elected member, both within the council and with partner organisations, they ensure that the needs of those with mental health problems are considered. This council also contends that a senior officer from Wokingham Borough Council will liaise with those running the Mental Health Challenge to see if anything they have to offer would benefit our delivery of services to the people of the Borough.'

The amendment to the Motion was accepted by the proposer of the original Motion.

Following further debate and upon being put to the meeting, the amended Motion was declared by the Mayor to be carried.

RESOLVED: That this Council notes:- 1 in 4 people will experience some form of mental health problem in their lifetime. Despite improvements in services and greater understanding of mental health conditions, there remains a stigma around mental health, which has endured, along with physical health inequalities - those with severe and enduring mental illness may die up to 20 years younger than their peers. As a local authority we have a crucial role to play in improving the mental health of everyone in our community and tackling some of the widest and most entrenched inequalities in health.

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63.2 Motion 377 submitted by Tom McCann:

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.2.12 (g) of the Council's Constitution, this Motion had been withdrawn earlier in the meeting as Minute 48 refers to.

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