

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2023 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.20 PM**

Members Present:

Councillors: Stephen Conway (Chair), Prue Bray (Vice-Chair), Rachel Bishop-Firth, Lindsay Ferris, Paul Fishwick, David Hare, Sarah Kerr, Clive Jones, Ian Shenton and Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

43. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 27 July 2023 and the extraordinary Executive meeting on 24 August 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

44. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Imogen Shepherd DuBey declared a personal interest in agenda item 51: Wokingham Borough Council Future Office Provision and agenda item 54: Promotion of Wokingham Borough Council Assets, as an employee of a company which produced modern workplace technology.

Councillor Lindsay Ferris declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 54: Promotion of Wokingham Borough Council Assets, as the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan. He advised that he would leave the room for the duration of this item and would not participate or vote.

Councillor Prue Bray declared a personal interest in agenda item 52: Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy 2023-26, as a trustee of the charity Kaleidoscope UK.

45. STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER

“I wanted to take this opportunity to update the Executive on progress with the Community Vision. Last evening, I attended a meeting of the Community Vision Steering Group, which is made up of representatives from business, the voluntary sector, health providers, faith groups, the university, and the youth council, as well as council officers. The leaders of the different political parties have a standing invitation to attend. The steering group is very ably chaired by Nick Fellows of the Wokingham Volunteer Centre.

After a lot of work with the different stakeholders, we now want to involve the wider community and seek their views on priorities. Our Engage platform will be used to promote two questionnaires – one short and punchy and one somewhat more detailed. They are now on Engage and will be there until 6 November. We have already begun to speak with community groups and use other forms of gathering views, such as this hard copy postcard.

I want to thank Jackie Whitney and her officer colleagues for all the work they are putting in to make sure that the process of community engagement moves forward, and all the steering group members for giving up their time and showing great commitment to making this a genuinely co-authored community vision. The enthusiasm and creativity of the steering group is very heartening and demonstrates what can be achieved by working in a partnership of equals.”

46. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

46.1 Colin Watts has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:

The Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan has repeatedly outlined a strategy as regards the Local Plan Update that is based on the housing target for Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) being reduced as a result of government changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), specifically a reduction to the housing target to take into account historic over provision of housing in Wokingham. No changes to the NPPF have yet been published by the government, yet now WBC has stated that it will publish a Proposed Submission Plan in November.

Given the absence of changes to the NPPF, should we therefore assume that the revised plan to be published in November will be based on the existing housing target of 768 dwellings per annum?

Answer

As you will know, we have sought to engage with Ministers in respect to national planning policy reforms.

In December 2022 the government published proposed reforms. Aspects of the proposals reflected our ask, such as the ability to take account of past over delivery of housing. We have cautiously welcomed the proposed reforms, but continue to lobby for further changes, such as how housing need is calculated and distributed spatially across England.

Whilst the government indicated they would respond to consultation responses on the reforms in the Spring, the messaging is now suggesting a response in Autumn. The delay is disappointing, and we will keep reminding Ministers of our views.

Despite the government's delays, we are continuing to progress the Local Plan, with an updated programme approved by Executive in July. This proposes the publication of the Proposed Submission Plan in November this year, followed by submission to the Secretary of State in 2024, and examination in public thereafter.

Our programme assumed the governments reforms will be published in time for us to reflect on them before confirming the Proposed Submission Plan. If the government reforms are delayed further, we will consider the consequences of this for our programme at that time.

Supplementary Question:

If the Government has not announced changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by November, will you delay publication of the updated Local Plan, as surely that would be the best thing to do?

Answer:

That would be the logical answer to how we will be progressing for the borough to take the best advantage of that change. If that change of overprovision which is nearly 2000 houses, in the borough that is quite a considerable number of extra homes that we do not

believe we should be having to deliver and so the answer would be that we would have to see what happens at the time and we would be looking to have the changes from the government before progressing.

46.2 Peter White has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport, and Leisure the following question:

Biodiversity net gain legislation is soon to be introduced. Can Wokingham Borough Council confirm that this legislation and the need for developers to make good on their destruction of local habitats for profit are at the forefront of the new local plan, and remediation will be local to the area of development, not “offsite” to an already more biodiverse area of the borough.

Answer:

As you say, delivery of biodiversity net gain in association with new development will become mandatory in the coming months and will strengthen the current protection for biodiversity in the planning process. The biodiversity net gain approach will be in addition to the existing planning protections for designated sites, habitats and species.

All council’s will be required to use a standard biodiversity calculator published by Natural England to assess the impact of a development proposals on biodiversity. This allows for offsite biodiversity improvements outside of the planning application area. Any offsite improvements proposed beyond both the local authority and relevant national character area have a lower value, providing an incentive for local biodiversity improvements.

To facilitate local biodiversity improvements, our emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy will identify areas, priorities and opportunities for nature recovery. This will help focus where actions to recover nature will be more effective and deliver better outcomes overall.

Turning to the emerging local plan, councils are able to set a higher target for biodiversity net gain through the plan making process. This can only be achieved however, where there is sufficient justification and where it is possible to demonstrate that the additional cost would not affect the viability of development when taking account of all other ‘asks’ such as the provision of infrastructure and affordable housing. We are looking at whether this is possible.

The government have 36 hours ago, pushed back the biodiversity net gain which was due to become effective from November. We were ready to implement despite the fact that the government was not ready with its legislative instruments. We are still ready to implement when they get around to it. I have said before publicly that this government is the most corrupt, dishonest and incompetent in this country’s history. It is now the most damaging in this country’s history in terms of our climate emergency with recent events and our biodiversity. They should be ashamed and anyone who continues to support this government should be ashamed of what they are doing.

Supplementary Question:

The government has seen fit to postpone biodiversity net gain legislation until some future time. It’s also been reported that most public sector Planning departments were not prepared for the legislation, many of them citing lack of expertise. Many actually welcome the delay, does Wokingham Borough Council welcome delay? If the updated Local Plan soon to be in consultation now puts biodiversity at risk due to legislation that would enforce biodiversity mediation being shelved.

Supplementary Answer:

We were ready to implement, other public sector areas may not have been. In terms of what it does to biodiversity in the Local Plan, we will make every effort to at least meet the government's minimum standards. We will put in whatever protection we can.

46.3 Gregor Murray has asked the Executive Member for Environment, Sport, and Leisure the following question:

As Gregor Murray was not in attendance, the Chair advised that a written response would be provided to him.

47. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

47.1 Councillor Gary Cowan has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

Cllr Clive Jones as Leader of the Lib Dems publicly campaigned with local residents against the proposed Conservative supported development of 4500 houses at Hall Farm.

Fighting the Hall Farm 4500 houses in public worked to very good effect as the recent election results shows enabling the Dems to take control of the Council after over 20 years of past Conservative Control.

The Conservatives plan is to build 2300 houses in the next 15 years as part of the Governments Housing requirements. The site is in the countryside on the side of the Loddon river which floods and in a climate emergency environment.

In addition to that the Conservative plan is for another 2200 houses to be built on Hall Farm from 2040 to 2055. These 2200 extra houses are not required in the governments mandatory and legally binding housing numbers.

When the Lib Dems took control, they could have easily removed the 2200 houses but they just sat on the fence and did nothing.

The Lib Dem leader fought the Hall Farm housing development in public but when the opportunity came their way to do something he did nothing.

Was this this just a cynical ploy to get votes?

Answer:

Thank you for your question, Gary.

As you correctly state, the Conservatives put Hall Farm in their draft Local Plan. We inherited that plan and have been seeking to improve it.

You are not correct, however, to say that we have done nothing on the Local Plan. On the contrary, our planning officers and my colleague the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan, have been working very hard on the many outstanding matters that need to

be addressed before a final version of the Local Plan can be submitted to the judgement of the inspector at public enquiry.

You know that I cannot comment on individual sites until Council, with all the relevant evidence available to it, debates the final version of the Local Plan. At that stage you will be able to form a judgement on whether we have improved on the Conservatives' draft plan, which they were keen that we submitted as it stood, without any amendments.

Supplementary Question:

You said that the government sets council housing targets and you added that the government tells councils how many new homes they must accommodate and give Planning permission for a 15 year local plan. I would suggest that you are a 100% correct, so why are you supporting a local housing plan, which is a plan to build 2,300 houses in the period 2040 to 2055 if they are not demanded by the government?

Supplementary Answer:

I partially covered this in my answer already which is that I can't comment on individual sites until the Council with all the evidence before it, debates the final version of the Local Plan. At that stage, we will be able to make a decision on the point that you raised. I don't think I can say anything more at this point.

47.2 Councillor Charles Margetts has asked the Executive Member for Finance the following question:

The council owns significant amounts of offices and retail space in Wokingham which are either empty or let at minimal / zero rent to charities. What plans does the council have to get maximum value for the taxpayer from these assets?

Answer

Despite the challenging economic conditions and some recent closures of individual units, in general Wokingham town centre bucks the wider economic picture and has relatively high occupation rates.

With regards to the property in the Council's ownership - the regeneration portfolio, including Elms Field and Peach Place, has an occupancy rate of over 95%. The Investment portfolio within the town centre has only one vacant unit within it, due to a recent business closure.

Later this year, part of the Council's Adult Services team, with its NHS partners, will take occupation of the offices at Resource House on Denmark Street. With this in mind, this building was adapted for wheelchair access, ramps and rails as part of a planning application in May, this year.

So, I would certainly refute your opening assumption that there is significant levels of Council-owned empty office and retail space in the town.

Some of our otherwise empty office units are being used by charities in the short term. It is a standard property management approach and has a double positive for the Council because it provides premises for these charitable organisations in the heart of the town, without them incurring commercial property costs, and therefore supports the charities in delivering important services and support for our residents. The occupation of these buildings by charities also helps the Council mitigate business rates and utility costs, which the Council would have to pay, if the buildings were just left empty.

The Council is continually reviewing and assessing the long-term permanent use of buildings occupied by our voluntary and charity sector partners, for either service use or commercial opportunities as they come through from the market. For example, the old Marks & Spencers building on Peach Street (currently occupied by Forces Support) will be considered by this Executive this evening as the potential new headquarters building for the Council.

Other buildings are also being considered for future Council services. Within the Sites Promotions report, also to be considered by this Executive this evening, office buildings Rubra I, II and Alba at Mulberry Business Park on Fishponds Road are being proposed for residential development, which could be specialist housing to meet our identified service needs.

Supplementary Question:

I note your comments on the building on Denmark Street, next to the car park. You'll forgive me for not knowing how much of that space, that relates to. Can you confirm, officers have previously outlined that that building is 23 square foot. Is the plan for adult social care services to take possession of it. All of it or part of it, what percentage roughly?

Answer:

Resource House is the building that is above the hairdressing salon and the Chinese supermarket. That is where adult social care are going. At the moment in the police station, we have First Days utilising that. The library is at the other end and is being used by Share, largely storing furniture. Other charities are also using this space, sub-letting parts to other charities so the buildings are in use. There are a whole multitude of things we are looking at for the other buildings at this point in time. Until we have worked it all through, we are not able to provide further information. There are plans being developed.

47.3 Councillor Rebecca Margetts has asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

The previous administration had been in discussion with local groups about the running of the community centre in the new Arborfield Green village centre.

I have not heard any progress with these discussions or if the groups previously interested are still involved. Please can you give me an update on when the full community centre will open.

Answer:

A Reserved Matters application, which includes the community centre, will be presented to Planning Committee on 11th October. If approved, a task and finish group will be formed. The group will work collaboratively on how and when the project will be delivered, alongside outcomes that will meet the needs of the local community – following community engagement.

The group will include Crest and key stakeholders from the community, such as Town and Parish Councils and local community groups. The new community building, if progressed as outlined in the planning application, would be completed in 2026.

Supplementary Question:

Residents have been told lots of things, dates slip. How will the Council try and ensure that Crest deliver?

Answer:

We first need to get Planning permission granted before we can be confident about any delivery dates. There has been very good engagement between our officers and Crest to try and move the project forward. I know you are interested as are many others keen to see this develop. We are very aware of that, we are doing all we can to make sure it happens.

47.4 Councillor Alison Swaddle has asked the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways the following question:

The Liberal Democrat led administration seems determined to deter drivers from visiting our towns.

Local business owners already fear for the future as customers choose to go elsewhere to avoid paying the highly increased car park charges in our towns. Several are close to shutting and some already have citing lack of foot fall brought about by the large parking charge increases as a major contributor to their demise.

We understand that Liberal Democrat councillors are well advanced in putting together proposals to implement on street parking charges in Wokingham town centre, including identifying sites for the kerbside payment machines.

Will you carry out a full consultation with residents before you make a decision on such proposals?

Answer

The short answer to your question is yes, there would be full public consultation before any major change to on street parking arrangements.

The council has for many years been considering on street parking as part of a wider parking management strategy for the borough, which would help relieve some of the existing pressure in residential roads and provide a fair approach to managing on-street parking restrictions, making it fairer for all residents, and before any of these are progressed, we would carry out a full public consultation, and approval process prior to anything being introduced.

As the Council has already advised, the webpage mock-up seen by the newspaper was part of early work being done to consider a potential review of on-street car parking policy in the future. There are no detailed plans for any changes to on-street parking at present and, if there are changes in the future, these will be fully consulted on.

The longer answer is that many shops and other businesses across the country are suffering because of the dreadful state of the economy. Cripplingly high mortgages and consistently high prices have combined to create something called the cost of living crisis.

What this Conservative-created crisis means is that everybody - people, businesses and local councils included - are struggling to make ends meet and having to make tough choices. A tough choice we made was to increase car park charges for the first time in over 5 years – a charge that would not have been needed if the previous administration had made sensible, small incremental price increases when they had the chance. Instead, they left the car park service unable to cover its costs which caused a drain on other resources.

The tough choices for some people this winter will include whether they eat or heat; in other words, do they miss a meal so they can warm a room? They will also have tough

choices about mortgage payments, fuel bills and how they afford the most basic of purchases.

In times such as these, it is sad but not surprising that some shops are struggling, across the country.

However, here in Wokingham Borough our initial findings suggest they are not struggling due to our parking charge changes. We will complete a full three-month review shortly, but early data shows usage of our car parks has actually gone up, since the charges increased.

We need to complete our three-month review to understand these figures fully, but these preliminary figures show it is certainly premature to suggest footfall has been hit by parking charge changes.

Supplementary Question:

I would like some assurance that when we have a consultation, it will have fair, open and unbiased questions and that the results of the consultation are carefully considered by the Executive to take account of what residents feel. We have had previous consultations where what residents feel and what is decided are quite different things. I would also like to offer you the opportunity to come and meet local business owners at Woodley precinct to hear from business owners who are very concerned. Local business owners feel very threatened and are afraid for the future.

Answer:

The Highways service is one of the busiest services in the Council. There are lots of changes that people request on an annual basis and we undertake assessments on those and we do an awful lot of background work. We consult on these, an example of this is the in excess of 200 parking restriction requests we receive.

We consult on pedestrian crossing areas, speed limit changes. We undertake consultations all the time. We will undertake a full consultation if we decide to take forward any changes to car park charging. Also, as I said, data is showing there hasn't been a decrease in car parking as a result of increased parking charges. The number of parking tickets purchased has increased when you compare like for like data from July and August. We are still waiting for the September figures to come in but the figures at the moment show July to have an 18,000 increase in ticket sales and for August over 7,000.

That is not small numbers and that is comparing like for like data. We need to look at the three month review first of all to see what that data is. As I've said before, across the Country, there are issues as a result of a Conservative created crisis, that we have now.

Executive Members reported that having visited between 40 and 50 local businesses in Woodley recently, most business understood the relatively modest increase in charges of between 80p and £1 per hour.

47.5 Councillor Graham Howe has asked the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan the following question:

Following the vast amount of rhetoric the ruling administration has made in the local press and their campaigning publications, and the promise of an invitation to a round table discussion, would the Executive member stop sitting on the fence, and would he now

explain in clear concrete terms what we can convey to Wokingham's residents as to exactly what will be in their Draft Local Plan and when will it be published for consultation?

Answer

No one is sitting on the fence.

The programme for the Local Plan was approved by Executive in July. This proposes the publication of the Proposed Submission Plan in November this year, followed by submission to the Secretary of State in 2024, and examination in public thereafter.

Whilst we wish to follow our programme, it assumed that the proposed government reforms to national Planning policy will be published in time for us to reflect on them before confirming the Proposed Submission Plan. The government initially indicated they would respond in the Spring. They are now talking about the Autumn and we've already waited a very, very long time for this Government to get its act together.

As you are aware, some of the proposed reforms could be very important to our communities, such as being able to take account of past housing over delivery.

If the government reforms are not published very soon, we will need to consider the consequences for our programme. Let's all hope Government gets its act together, but if not, we will need to consider the consequences on our programme. I would hope that any consequences would be modest.

The alternative would be to proceed without taking account of matters that we know are important. I would be surprised if that is what you are advocating.

Supplementary Question:

In business we need numbers, timelines and predictability. The problem remains that throughout the debate on the Local Plan, there has been caveat after caveat which is dependent on what happens in local government. At some point or other, we collectively need to make decisions for our residents and doing things regardless of how the future may be. From that point of view, I would seek to get some predictability for our residents from the current administration.

Answer:

The Local Plan process started as long ago as 2016, it has been seven years. The most helpful thing to do would be to persuade Michael Gove MP to issue the National Planning Policy Framework proposed changes that he had in the draft document that was consulted on last December through to March. In that, it clearly indicated that the government were considering taking out overprovision from one Local Plan and into the next.

Wokingham Borough Council is one of a small number across the Country in that position, we had correspondence from the government which sounds hopeful. We are dependent on that and I would not want to move forward with a Local Plan where we have the possibility of the current figure as 1727 the revised figure may be even higher in terms of new housing. I will not move forward with a Local Plan which includes nearly 2,000 houses extra into a Local Plan.

The Chair confirmed that the Council would take the final decision on the Local Plan and that members of the Council should not comment on individual sites.

48. RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Executive Member for Finance reported that this report set out an important element of the Council's governance arrangements and that it was good practice to regularly review the policy and guidance.

RESOLVED that the Executive approved the Risk Management Policy & Guidance, noting the comments made by the Audit Committee on 19 July 2023.

49. TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT

The Executive Member for Finance reported that this was an important report given the current financial climate. She highlighted that it was important that the Council continued to strive to keep costs low and to reduce interest payments wherever possible, given the significant pressures on the Council's budget.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Finance and officers for all their hard work to ensure that the Council continued to manage finances carefully.

RESOLVED that the Executive supported the Treasury Management Outturn Report 2022-23 and recommended it to Council and noted:

1) that all approved indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy have been adhered to; with the exceptions of;

- Internal borrowing ratio.
- Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – General Fund.
- Capital financing requirement – HRA.

2) As at the end of March 2023, the total external general fund debt was £118m, which reduces to £68m after taking into account cash balances (net indebtedness) reducing interest costs in the current economic climate. This was an improved position from the forecast at mid-year stage of £81m net indebtedness and £72m at March 2022.

50. RESIDENTIAL LEASEHOLD INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Executive Member for Finance reported that there had been a sharp increase in insurance premiums. This report sought to enter a procurement process to secure the best possible arrangements for leaseholders.

RESOLVED that the Executive approved this request to conduct a competitive procurement exercise to enable the Council to obtain the best value buildings insurance policy to provide adequate cover for buildings insurance for council leaseholders and shared ownership properties.

51. ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP

The Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport & Highways thanked officers for working closely with local bus operators to finalise the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The Executive Member for Equalities, Inclusion and Fighting Poverty reported that she was very pleased to see access to reliable, affordable transport, which was essential to fight poverty. It also added a further element of choice for people who wished to travel.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member and officers for all their hard work on this.

RESOLVED that the Executive approved the Enhanced Partnership Agreement so that it can become formally “made” into a legal agreement between Wokingham Borough Council and local bus operators by the end of September 2023.

52. WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL FUTURE OFFICE PROVISION

Councillor Imogen Shepherd DuBey declared a personal interest in this agenda item, as an employee of a company which produced modern workplace technology.

The Chair reported that the Council continued to seek savings, given the difficult financial circumstances faced. Currently Shute End was significantly under-occupied with less than a quarter of the building being used most days, with staff making use of remote working.

A number of options were being considered and appraised.

RESOLVED that the Executive:

1. Agreed in principle that the Council should review its office accommodation provision, including the opportunities for the relocation of its headquarters out of Shute End, to a more appropriately sized and more energy efficient building(s)
2. Agreed that 28-38 Peach Street, Wokingham is the preferred alternative headquarters location and, subject to the approval of resources, will be the focus of more detailed feasibility and planning work
3. Approved a Supplementary Estimate of £175,000 within this financial year to fund feasibility, detailed design work and programme and project costs, including external consultancy support and expertise, for the alternative headquarter location
4. Noted that updates and outputs from the next stage of feasibility work will be reported back to the Executive.

53. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS STRATEGY 2023-26

Councillor Prue Bray declared a personal interest as a trustee of the charity Kaleidoscope UK.

The Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Resident Services reported that violence against women and girls was often hidden and underreported, with women and girls fearing they would not be believed. Enough was not being done to tackle deep rooted misogyny.

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- 1) Formally approved the Wokingham Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2023-2026 subject to the strategy being presented to the Wokingham Borough Wellbeing Board and any further amendments arising being delegated to the Director of Place & Growth in consultation with the Lead Member; and
- 2) Requested that the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership (WCSP) adopt the approved VAWG Strategy with the WCSP taking responsibility for the further development and oversight of the VAWG Strategy and Action Plan.

54. BOHUNT WOKINGHAM SCHOOL 6TH FORM: OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Member for Children's Services reported that there had been ongoing discussions with the Trust, which had been fruitful and had improved the relationship with the Trust.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Children's Services and officers for all their hard work.

RESOLVED that the Executive:

- 1) Noted the additional feasibility work undertaken and the assessment of options to bring 6th form education to Bohunt with timescale and costs/value for money tests
- 2) Adopted the recommended option of delivering the provision of 300 sixth form places and 150 extra Year 7-11 school places by the construction of an extension to the existing school building (Option 1), while the new sixth form being part of local inclusion system contributing to preparation for adulthood for the SEND students, both with and without EHCP.
- 3) Approved a capital budget up to £5.25m funded through borrowing towards the school extension, subject to the Bohunt Education Trust (BET) match-funding current cost estimates and sharing risks related to increased building costs and their commitment to the provision of the additional required school places
- 4) Delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services and Director of Resources and Assets, in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services and the Leader of the Council, to enter into an agreement with the Bohunt Education Trust (BET) to secure the provision of additional school places and the commitment of match-funding and shared liabilities for the school extension.

55. PROMOTION OF WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL ASSETS

Councillor Imogen Shepherd DuBey declared a personal interest in this agenda item, as an employee of a company which produced modern workplace technology.

Councillor Lindsay Ferris declared a prejudicial interest in this agenda item, as the Executive Member for Planning and the Local Plan. He left the room for the duration of this item and did not participate or vote.

The Chair advised that the report set out which sites would be either promoted or withdrawn from the Local Plan, where the council was the landowner. It was noted that the final decision to approve the Local Plan would rest with full Council.

The Executive Member for Business & Economic Development reported that he was delighted to see that it was proposed that the Covid Memorial Wood should be progressed. This would provide a special and important place for quiet contemplation for Wokingham residents.

RESOLVED that the Executive:

1. Approved the list of Council owned assets in **Appendix A** to be promoted to the Local Plan process for the land uses identified, delivering circa 405 dwellings and with an estimated land value of £41.750m (as set out in Part 2 of the report).

2. Agreed that the Council owned assets in **Appendix B**, which were previously promoted to the local plan process be withdrawn, and in turn forego the delivery of circa 352 dwellings and the estimated land value of £27.7m (as set out in Part 2 of the report).
3. Delegated authority to the Director of Resources & Assets, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Finance, to promote the sites to the Local Plan and partake in the Local Plan process, including the submissions of any further representations to the process.

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