



**Meeting of
West Berkshire
District Council**

19 October 2004

Summons and Agenda

To: All Members of the Council

You are requested to attend a meeting of
WEST BERKSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

to be held in the
COUNCIL OFFICES, MARKET STREET, NEWBURY

on
TUESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2004
at 7.00 p.m.

Head of Policy and Performance
West Berkshire District Council

Date: 8 October 2004

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting (if any).

2. **MINUTES**

The Chairman to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 August 2004.
(Page Nos. 1-7)

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive notice of any Declarations of Interest from Members.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman to report on functions attended since the last meeting and other matters of interest to Members.

Agenda – Council Meeting to be held on 19 October 2004 *(continued)*

5. PETITIONS

Councillors may present any petition which they have received. These will normally be referred to the appropriate body without discussion.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Members of the Executive to answer the following questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with the Council's Constitution (*Note: There were no questions submitted relating to items not included on this Agenda*)

7. SELECT COMMITTEES

To receive the Minutes of the meetings of the Select Committees as detailed below:

- (a) Strategy and Commissioning – 14 September 2004 (**Page Nos. 8-10**)
- (b) Community Care and Housing – 07 September 2004 (**Page Nos. 11-13**)
- (c) Environment and Public Protection – 21 September 2004 (**Page Nos. 14-27**)

8. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND LICENSING COMMITTEES

The Council is asked to note that since the last meeting of the Council, the Planning and Development Committee has met on 1 September 2004 and the Licensing Committee on 13 September 2004. Copies of the Minutes of these meetings can be obtained from Policy and Performance or via the Council's website.

9. NHS DENTISTRY IN WEST BERKSHIRE: SCRUTINY REPORT *(Page Nos.28-39)*

To consider the findings of the review into NHS dentistry in West Berkshire undertaken by the Health Scrutiny Panel.

10. ADOPTION OF BERKSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN 2001-2016 *(Page Nos.40-42)*

To consider the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016.

11. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION *(Page Nos. 43-44)*

To consider proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation relating to the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

- (a) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Royce Longton:**
“In response to the growing interest in the settled community at the increasing incidence of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments, and acknowledging the expressed needs of this traveller community, West Berkshire Council calls upon ODPM, SEERA, the Planning Inspectorate and LGA to note and take urgent supportive action on the following: -
 1. West Berkshire Council reaffirms acceptance of any legislative obligation within defined limits to provide Gypsy and Traveller accommodation, and requests ODPM equally to acknowledge these limits if the integrity of the national planning regime is to be respected. The Local Plan or its successor shall continue to be the primary land-use determinant.
 2. A strategically located network of Gypsy and Traveller sites shall be a required feature of the Regional Spatial Strategy, underwritten by central funding, the whole or partial implementation of which will rank as a material consideration in the context of planning procedures. Each built site shall be deemed to provide for a declared radius.”

Agenda – Council Meeting to be held on 19 October 2004 (continued)

3. National planning regulations and Local Development Framework policies shall bind equally upon the settled and travelling communities in the protection of the rights of all parties. Specifically, the Temporary Stop Notice provision of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 shall have universal application and shall be renewable by the initiating authority every 28 days.
4. Preferably in conjunction with Thames Valley Police Authority each Local Authority shall work on a partnership footing with Gypsy and Traveller representative organisations to establish a local community relations protocol, which shall incorporate a planning statement on Gypsy and Traveller encampments, and impact of Anti Social Behaviour Orders.
5. Representatives of all relevant bodies shall be required formally to meet before any new site is set up to ensure the provision of appropriate social, education and health support for community development as well as to meet annually to review/revise the effective operation of this programme.
6. All Thames Valley MPs shall be advised of this action being taken by West Berkshire Council, requesting their acceptance in reinforcing and advancing the programme through their individual networks.”

(b) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Tony Vickers:

“This Council:

- Notes with dismay the failure of the Government’s Balance of Funding Review to recommend any urgent action to deal with the crisis in local government finance, other than to set up another review;
- Notes with concern the continuing rise in land and house prices across the Region, nowhere greater than in West Berkshire, largely caused by the problems for developers and their partners in funding affordable housing on new sites, which is seriously threatening the local economy by worsening recruitment and retention of key workers in public services and the welfare of young families and local communities;
- Further notes with concern the Barker Report on house prices for HM Treasury which recommends a Planning Gain Supplement that would stifle house building and take money out of the Region’s economy;
- Condemns the failure of Government to even consider the possibility of funding vital public infrastructure projects and affordable housing from the Region’s buoyant land values, despite the recognition of Government that such projects serve to increase and sustain prosperity and hence land values;
- Therefore applauds the initiative of Oxfordshire County Council and White Horse District Council to undertake a study of Land Value Taxation as a possible source of local government finance;

The Council calls on:

- (a) the Government to support such studies as a matter of urgency before making any decisions on reform of local property taxes; and
- (b) ACTVaR members and their Local Strategic Partners in this Region to:-
 - (1) work together to lobby Government accordingly and
 - (2) as far as possible within current national policy constraints, to seek co-ordinated local solutions to the affordable housing crisis.”

(c) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Graham Jones:

“This Council expresses its concern at the continuing loss of rural facilities, including the impending loss of the HSBC Bank at Compton and the Post Office at Bradfield as reported in the Newbury Weekly News of 7/10/2004.

Consequently it resolves to:

1. Write to HSBC expressing its concerns and requesting discussions on the future of the bank at Compton.

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2. Ask officers to draw up a feasibility study for the creation of rural 'one stop shops', where different combinations of local facilities (such as banking, post offices, police points, libraries, public houses and village shops) can be brought together in rural locations in a way that is economically and socially sustainable for the long term."

13. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Members of the Executive to answer the following questions submitted by Councillors in accordance with the Council's Constitution:

- (a) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation submitted by Councillor Graham Jones:**
"With regard to Companion travel tokens for those with disabilities, can the Executive Member tell me:
 - 1) *Who made the decision in summer of 2003 to withdraw the issue of companion tokens for new applicants whilst leaving the entitlement in place for those already in receipt of them?*
 - 2) *What authority they had to make that decision?*
 - 3) *Whether the Lead Member believes it is fair, and in line with anti-discrimination policies and legislation, that the current system grants companion tokens to existing claimants, whilst denying the same benefits to those with similar or potentially greater need who happen to have suffered the onset of their disability (or applied for the first time) after this decision was made?"*
- (b) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member with responsibility for Financial Management submitted by Councillor Paul Bryant:**
"The Council has commissioned an externally funded consultant's report on the future use of smartcards in West Berkshire. When can we expect this report to be made public so that Members can deliberate on the potential benefits of an integrated smartcard scheme for Council services?"
- (c) **Question to be answered by the Leader of Council submitted by Councillor Graham Jones:**
"Given the headlines in the Newbury Weekly News (7/10/04) on the Amey contract, which will be of great concern to staff at Amey West Berkshire, can the Council Leader:
 - 1) *Reassure staff of Amey West Berkshire that their jobs are safe?*
 - 2) *Assure residents that there will be no impact on Council Tax as a result of difficulties with the contract?*
 - 3) *Confirm whether the contract will continue for its full term?"*
- (d) **Question to be answered by the Leader of Council submitted by Councillor Brian Bedwell:**
"When did the Council Leader first become aware of problems with the Amey Contract?"