

# COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 OCTOBER 2004

**Councillors:** James Mole (*Chairman*) (P), Mrs Barbara Alexander (P), Peter Argyle (P), Trevor Banning (P), Phil Barnett (P), Brian Bedwell (P), J.C.G. Brooks (P), Paul Bryant (P), Mrs Val Bull (P), George Chandler (P), John Chapman (AP), Keith Chopping (P), Billy Drummond (P), Sue Farrant (P), John Farrin (P), Geoff Findlay (P), Marcus Franks (P), Mrs Kathleen French (P), Miss Denise Gaines (P), Manohar Gopal (P), Mrs Sally Hannon (P), Mrs Sandra Harding (P), Roger Hunneman (P), Owen Jeffery (P), Graham Jones (P), Bob Judge (P), Mrs Susie Kemp (AP), Andy Kilgour (AP), Tony Linden (P), Mrs Mollie Lock (AP), Keith Lock (P), Dr Royce Longton (P), Gordon Lundie (P), Alan Macro (P), Tim Metcalfe (P), Joe Mooney (AP), Mrs Irene Neill (P), Graham Pask (P), Alexander Payton (P), Terry Port (P), Paul Pritchard (P), Mike Rodger (P), Andrew Rowles (P), Anthony Stansfeld (P), Ms Caroline Suggett (P), Julian Swift-Hook (P), Tony Vickers (*Vice-Chairman*) (P), Quentin Webb (P), Chris Webber (P), Emma Webster (P), Keith Woodhams (P), Laszlo Zverko (P)

### PART I

#### 33. APOLOGIES.

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors John Chapman, Susie Kemp, Andy Kilgour, Mollie Lock, Joe Mooney.

#### 34. MINUTES.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 26 August 2004 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor Graham Jones declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 (Minute 41)  
Councillor Tony Vickers declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 12(b) (Minute 45).

#### 36. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS.

The Chairman reported that he had attended 44 events since the last Council Meeting. Councillor Mole highlighted the following events:

- The Royal County of Berkshire Show – which was particularly important for the area and at which he was involved in the Road Safety stand;
- Launch of the new CLIVE vehicle with the Countryside Agency;
- Taking part in a road safety demonstration at Newbury College;
- 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party for a resident at Notrees in Kintbury;
- Thatcham Festival of Arts including a concert at St Mary's Church in Thatcham where he saw many good performances by local groups;
- Newbury AFC v Bognor Regis FC in a FA Cup qualifying match; and
- West Berkshire Community Hospital League of Friends Luketide Service.

The Chairman also thanked Margaret Blaine and Lynda Pye for their organisation of the Macmillan Coffee Morning which raised over £1,300.

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### 37. PETITIONS.

There were no petitions presented.

### 38. PUBLIC QUESTIONS.

There were no public questions received.

### 39. SELECT COMMITTEES.

The relevant Chairman or Vice-Chairman presented the Minutes of the Select Committees as detailed below:

- (a) Strategy and Commissioning – 14 September 2004.
- (b) Community and Care Housing – 7 September 2004.
- (c) Environment and Public Protection – 21 September 2004.

### 40. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND LICENSING COMMITTEES.

The Council noted that, since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, the Planning and Development Committee had met on 13 October 2004. The Council also noted that the Licensing Committee had met on 13 October 2004.

### 41. NHS DENTISTRY IN WEST BERKSHIRE: SCRUTINY REPORT.

*(Councillor Graham Jones declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 as he was a member of the PCT Executive. Councillor Jones remained in the Chamber and voted on the item.)*

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 9) concerning the findings of the review into NHS dentistry in West Berkshire undertaken by the Health Scrutiny Panel, which was established by the Community Care and Housing Select Committee at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003. The Panel then decided that for its first scrutiny review it would look into National Health Service (NHS) dentistry provision in West Berkshire.

The Chairman of the Panel, Councillor Sue Farrant, commented that it was not often that an investigation was completed but the Panel felt more confused at the end, which was largely due to an apparent lack of coherent information. There were still some questions that needed answering and the Panel intended to carry on finding the information.

Members queried whether there were particular groups of people who did not register with dentists eg students or vulnerable groups and, if so, it would be worth finding out who these groups were and why they did not register.

Members were pleased with the document and believed that further investigative work was required in particular ascertaining how many practices had gone from NHS to private. Members acknowledged that there appeared to be a shortage of dentists and felt that there was a need to lobby at the highest level to ensure that there was an increase in the number of dentists and that remuneration levels should be extended.

The Chairman of the Panel thanked Members for their comments which would be picked up when the subject was revisited.

**MOTION** - Proposed by Sue Farrant and seconded by Tony Linden

That the NHS Dentistry in West Berkshire: Scrutiny report be supported and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

**42. ADOPTION OF BERKSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN 2001-2016.**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 10) relating to the adoption of the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 which was due to replace the Berkshire Structure Plan 1991-2006 which was adopted in 1995 and set out the strategic planning framework for Berkshire up to 2016. On adoption of the 2001-2016 Plan the 1991-2006 Structure Plan would be replaced and would no longer be a material consideration in planning decisions.

The Leader of Council reported that the Structure Plan had been produced by the Joint Strategic Planning Committee which contained six Berkshire Unitary authorities and had been through a consultation process and matters such as the housing allocation to West Berkshire had already been incorporated into the Council's Local Plan.

The Leader reported that he was pleased that the new Structure Plan contained strong policies on matters such as the need to incorporate high standards of energy efficiency, and to give serious consideration to the inclusion of renewable technologies, in all new build.

Members noted that it appeared likely that the Structure Plan would be adopted shortly by five of the six Berkshire Unitary Authorities as Wokingham was likely to decline to adopt the Plan as they objected to the size of their housing allocation.

Members suggested that consideration should be given to the use of domestic sprinklers in new build properties as a means of savings lives.

**MOTION** - Proposed by Royce Longton and seconded by Owen Jeffery

That the Berkshire Structure Plan 2001-2016 as set out in Appendix 10 to the report be formally adopted.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

**43. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION.**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 11) concerning proposed changes to the Scheme of Delegation in relation to the inclusion of the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Environmental Protection Act 1990 which although previously included in the old Standing Orders did not appear in the Council's Constitution.

**MOTION** - Proposed by Royce Longton and seconded by Emma Webster

That the changes to the Scheme of Delegation, as set out in Paragraph 1.2 of the report, be approved.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

**44. NOTICE OF MOTION.**

The Council considered the undermentioned Motion (Agenda Item 12(a)) concerning the increasing incidence of unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments whilst acknowledging the expressed needs of the traveller community.

During discussion of this Motion the Leader of Council stated that he understood that the LGA had arranged a roundtable meeting on Gypsy and Traveller issues at the ODPM. Councillor Longton urged Officers to attempt to acquire an invitation to these discussions.

**MOTION** - Proposed by Royce Longton and seconded by Susie Kemp (in her absence, and with the agreement of the Chairman of Council, the item was seconded by Graham Jones):

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: -

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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.
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.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

### 45. NOTICE OF MOTION.

*(Councillor Vickers declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 12(b) by virtue of the fact that he had undertaken work on this Item.)*

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda Item 12(b)) concerning various items relating to Local Government finance and the effect on funding affordable housing.

**MOTION** - Proposed by Tony Vickers and seconded by Royce Longton

That the Motion as set out below be referred to the Affordable Housing Task Group to come back to the Council meeting in December:

“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;

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- 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."

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

### 46. NOTICE OF MOTION.

The Council considered the undermentioned Motion (Agenda Item 12(c)) relating to the continuing loss of rural facilities, including the impending loss of the HSBC Bank at Compton and the Post Office at Bradfield as recently reported.

All Members of Council expressed concern about the loss of rural facilities and particularly the knock-on effect of closures which normally resulted in residents accessing facilities in other, usually larger, areas. Members were also concerned at the lack of notice given of these closures particularly when possible solutions could be found if more time was given.

**MOTION** - Proposed by Barbara Alexander and seconded by Alan Macro

The Council resolved to:

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

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

### 47. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS.

- (a) A question standing in the name of Councillor Graham Jones on the subject of Companion travel tokens for those with disabilities was answered by the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation.
- (b) A question standing in the name of Councillor Paul Bryant on the subject of the future use of Smartcards was answered by the Executive Member with responsibility for Financial Management.

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- (c) A question standing in the name of Councillor Graham Jones on the subject of the Amey contract was answered by the Leader of Council.
- (d) A question standing in the name of Councillor Brian Bedwell on the subject of the Amey contract was answered by the Leader of Council.

*(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.10pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature:** .....