

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 2013

Note: These Minutes have been amended. Please see Minutes of 14 May 2013.

Councillors Present: David Allen, Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell, David Betts, Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks, Paul Bryant, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Richard Crumly, Billy Drummond, Adrian Edwards (Chairman), Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hewer, David Holtby, John Horton, Roger Hunneman, Carol Jackson-Doerge (Vice-Chairman), Mike Johnston, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Gordon Lundie, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, Tim Metcalfe, Joe Mooney, Irene Neill, David Rendel, Andrew Rowles, Garth Simpson, Julian Swift-Hook, Ieuan Tuck, Tony Vickers, Virginia von Celsing, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster, Keith Woodhams and Laszlo Zverko

Honorary Alderman Present: Geoff Findlay

Also Present: John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Margaret Goldie (Corporate Director - Communities), Andy Walker (Head of Finance) and Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Gillian Durrant (Group Executive (Lib Dems)), Moira Fraser (Democratic Services Manager) and Robin Steel (Group Executive (Cons))

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Peter Argyle, Councillor Mollie Lock, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor Graham Pask and Councillor Anthony Stansfeld

Councillor Absent: Councillor George Chandler

PART I

45. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman welcomed Councillor David Betts back to the chamber. He also welcomed the new Corporate Director for Communities Rachael Wardell to the meeting.

The Chairman reported that he had attended 29 events since the last Council meeting. He thanked Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge for attending two events when he was unable to. He also thanked Councillors Paul Bryant and Anthony Stansfeld for attending two events on his behalf.

Highlights included three visits to Care Homes, two carol services, a band concert by the Hungerford Town Band, the annual Holocaust Memorial Day service, the Berkshire Inspiration and Participation award ceremony, two school visits, the event marking the relocation of the Tourist Information Centre and four citizenship ceremonies.

The Chairman made special mention of his charity coffee morning in Newbury Town Hall which raised £440 for his charity Help for Heroes. He thanked all those who had contributed to and attended and also Jude Thomas and her family for helping to organise and run the event. He also thanked the Mayor of Newbury and his Civic Manager for letting him use the Town Hall.

The Chairman reminded members that he would be hosting his charity golf day on the 15 April at the Newbury and Crookham Golf Club.

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The Chairman concluded by thanking the emergency services, the police, ambulance and fire and rescue service for their tireless work during the flooding and snow at the beginning of this year. He also thanked Council staff and contractors for keeping the roads safe to drive on and for continuing to collect refuse during the periods of inclement weather. He made special mention of the Civil Contingencies Manager for keeping everyone informed about the situation on the ground.

46. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2012 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion of the following amendments:

Item 26 Page 4 Chairman's Remarks last paragraph delete the word 'arrival' and replace with 'birth'

Item 45 Page 20 Notices of Motions Item (26b) second paragraph delete words 'he was a governor at a school' and replace with 'they were governors at schools'.

The Minutes of the Special meeting on the 13 December 2012 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the inclusion of the following amendments:

Councillors Present: Councillors David Rendel and Keith Woodhams left the meeting during the consideration of the item pertaining to the Honorary Alderman and this was not recorded in the minutes.

47. Declarations of Interest

The Deputy Monitoring Officer announced that all Members present, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, had applied for and had been granted a dispensation to consider any matter which had a bearing on the setting of the council tax (items 14, 15, 16 and 17 on this agenda). Failure to grant this dispensation would impede the transaction of the business because of the number of Councillors having the same disclosable pecuniary interest.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer also announced that Councillor Julian Swift-Hook, who was the Chairman of the Trustees of West Berkshire Mencap, had been granted a dispensation by the Standards Committee to speak on items pertaining to any detailed discussions on the Council's Budget and Council Tax items involving Mencap although he was not permitted to vote on these items. This dispensation would be valid until May 2015.

Councillor David Rendel declared an interest in Agenda Item 19 ((health and Wellbeing Strategy), but reported that, as his interest was personal and not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

48. Petitions

Councillor Roger Hunneman presented a petition containing 1719 signatures relating to Newbury on Street Parking Charges. The petition would be referred to the Head of Highways and Transport who was responsible for conducting the consultation exercise on this.

Councillor Hunneman in presenting the petition noted that at some other Councils a petition of this size would trigger a debate and he would like to revisit this issue at a later date.

(Councillor Paul Hewer arrived at 6.37pm)

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Councillor David Holtby presented a petition containing 107 signatures relating to the provision of a zebra crossing in Bridge Street, Hungerford. The petition would be referred to the Head of Highways and Transport.

49. **Public Questions**

A question standing in the name of Ms Judith Bunting pertaining to pressures arising from increasing caseloads involving homeless people was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Council Strategy & Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Support, Strategic Support and Legal.

50. **Licensing Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Licensing Committee had not met.

51. **Personnel Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting of the Council, the Personnel Committee had met on 20 December 2012 and 19 February 2013.

52. **Governance and Audit Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Governance and Audit Committee had met on 11 February 2013.

53. **District Planning Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the District Planning Committee had met on 27 February 2013 contrary to what was stated in the agenda.

54. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had met on 04 February 2013 (special) and the 26 February 2013.

55. **Standards Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Standards Committee had met on 28 February 2013.

56. **West Berkshire Council Strategy Refresh 2013-17 (C2544)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 13) concerning the refreshed version of the Council Strategy (2013-17).

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Roger Croft and seconded by Councillor Dominic Boeck:

That the Council:

1. "Notes areas still to be updated (highlighted in yellow) relating to confirmation of the revenue budget.
2. notes the strategic objectives
3. approves the current version of the Council Strategy".

In proposing this item Councillor Croft explained that the Strategy provided a broad framework for the delivery of services over the next five years. It also illustrated how the Council's resources would be shaped in order to deliver the priorities. Councillor Croft noted that the section pertaining to the budget would need to be updated following approval of the Council's Revenue Budget and Capital Programme that evening.

Councillor Croft reported that this was a refresh of the existing strategy and that it had not been amended significantly. The most notable change was the inclusion of a section

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pertaining to public health as this function would be transferring to the Council as of the 01 April 2013.

Councillor Tony Vickers raised concerns that the issue of homelessness and provision of affordable housing was not adequately addressed in the strategy.

Councillor Gordon Lundie thanked Councillor Croft for the work he had done in drawing together the strategy. He noted that the transfer into and integration of Public Health into the authority and the activity around this function would be a major area of work over the next five years. He opined that this would strengthen democratic input into the health of West Berkshire. In order to assist Members with this process he hoped to circulate data to Members on their wards in the near future. The challenge would be to permeate the Public Health agenda through the Council.

Councillor Gordon Lundie also thanked Councillor Croft for the production of the strategy and welcomed the inclusion of the four priorities of:

- caring for and protecting the vulnerable;
- promoting a vibrant district;
- improving education;
- protecting the environment.

Councillor Lundie sympathised with Councillor Vickers's comments on the issues of homelessness and affordable housing. He explained that he would be setting up a Panel to look into the issue of affordable housing and that he would welcome Councillor Vickers's input into the Panel.

Councillor Lundie had also reflected on the Motion submitted to the December 2012 Council meeting pertaining to academies and as a consequence had provided additional investment in the budget to assist with school improvement irrespective of whether schools were academies or not.

Councillor Jeff Brooks explained that although his group felt that the strategy had a lot of merit they were not able to support it due to the omission of measures to deal with housing referred to earlier by Councillor Vickers.

Councillor Dominic Boeck in seconding the strategy explained that it had been well received by external organisations and he thanked those that had helped to produce this condensed version of the document.

Councillor Roger Croft commended the report to Council for approval.

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

57. **Borrowing Limits and Annual Investment Strategy 2013/14 (C2506)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 14) concerning the Council's borrowing limits as set out by CIPFA's Prudential Code and seeking approval of the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategy for 2013/14. The report was required in order to comply with the Local Government Act 2003.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Alan Law and seconded by Councillor Laszlo Zverko:

That the Council:

“adopts the 2013/14 Borrowing and Investment Strategy.”

Councillor Alan Law in introducing this report noted that this was an administrative paper which sought permission to increase the Council's borrowing limits by £27m for the forthcoming financial year. He explained that £25m of this related to a technical adjustment that had to be made to bring the Padworth Waste site onto the balance sheet

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as a result of changes to accounting regulations. The other funding related to a number of small amendments to capital funding largely to fund basic need numbers in some of the districts schools.

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

58. **Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2013-16 (C2504)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 15) concerning the medium term financial planning and strategy for the Council.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Alan Law and seconded by Councillor Laszlo Zverko:

That the Council:

“approves and adopts the 2013-2016 Medium Term Financial Strategy.”

Councillor Law in introducing this item noted that it was one of the most important documents to be considered by the Council. The document set out how resources would be directed to support the Council's four main priorities over the medium term.

To maintain the current level of service the Council would need to find an additional 2.4m over each of the next three years. An additional £8m of unavoidable pressures, primarily from the demand led services, would also need to be factored into future planning. The Council would also need to find an additional £10m to fund contractual increases and reductions in government grants over the next three years.

It was proposed that this £25m funding gap would be met by £17m of savings over the next three years. The remaining revenue funding (£7.6m) would therefore have to be generated by a 2% increase in Council Tax in 2013/14. (with 0% anticipated increases in 2014/15 and 2015/16).

Councillor David Rendel noted that the figures provided in this year's MTFS differed significantly from the previous year's version. Councillor Rendel implored the Council to accept the Government's Council Tax Freeze Grant thereby negating the need for the 2% Council Tax increase.

Councillor Graham Jones responded by saying that it was inevitable that the figures in the MTFS would change as new information emerged. The Council was faced with many difficult decisions and the Administration was seeking to maintain services within a framework of diminishing resources.

Councillor Jeff Brooks explained that his group would not be supporting the MTFS as they had concerns that the document lacked consistency.

Councillor Gordon Lundie in seconding the report noted that the MTFS was an organic document that had to be updated numerous times to take cognisance of information emerging from Central Government. Councillor Lundie referred to the illustrative document circulated by the Liberal Democrat group and noted the suggestion of a 2.94% increase in 2015/16 and reminded Members that an increase in Council Tax over 2% would trigger a referendum which would have significant costs attached to it.

Councillor Alan Law reiterated that the MTFS and the figures within it needed to be amended on an ongoing basis to reflect information and funding emanating from Central Government. He illustrated this by explaining that information pertaining to the basic needs grant had only been issued the previous day and would need to be factored into future planning.

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

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.17.3 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Motion be recorded.

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FOR the Motion:

Councillors Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell, David Betts, Dominic Boeck, Paul Bryant, Virginia von Celsing, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Richard Crumly, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hewer, David Holtby, John Horton, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Mike Johnson, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Joe Mooney, Irene Neill, Andrew Rowles, Garth Simpson, Ieuan Tuck, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster, Laszlo Zverko (34)

AGAINST the Motion:

Councillors David Allen, Jeff Brooks, Billy Drummond, Roger Hunneman, Royce Longton, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, David Rendel, Julian Swift-Hook, Tony Vickers, Keith Woodhams (11)

ABSTAINED:

Adrian Edwards (1)

59. Capital Strategy and Programme 2013-2018 (C2503)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 16) concerning the draft five year Capital Strategy (2013 to 2018) including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement and the Asset Management Plan (AMP).

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Alan Law and seconded by Councillor Gordon Lundie:

That the Council:

1. “approves the proposed Capital Strategy and Programme;
2. keeps the proposed level of Education capital commitments under review until future levels of government grant funding are known and more detailed and accurate estimates of future pupil numbers and the cost of works required to provide sufficient school places are available.”

Councillor Alan Law in introducing this item reported that it set out the planned investment for the next five years. The majority of the programme reflected the Council’s strategic priorities with £38.6m being spent on schools, £39m would be spent on the district’s road network and £8.2m on various programmes to support vulnerable people. The document was similar to the programme agreed the previous year. The most notable changes were an additional £4.9m investment to address the increase in basic needs numbers in the district’s schools and £1.8m in ICT to support the Council’s efficiency programmes.

Councillor Tony Vickers reported that he had concerns about the disposal of assets in the current economic climate and suggested that it might be preferable to retain these assets until the market was more favourable. Councillor Vickers also suggested that it would be beneficial to residents for the Council to use s106 funding to purchase additional affordable housing stock

Councillor Gordon Lundie in seconding the item explained that the Administration had sought to establish the best possible programme for the residents of West Berkshire. The demise of the Council’s highly successful s106 scheme, which would be replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), would result in less income for the Council. Councillor Lundie noted Councillor Vickers’s comments on asset disposal. He felt that the issue of purchasing additional affordable housing stock was an interesting point to ponder.

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Councillor Alan Law explained that the vast majority of the assets being disposed of (which would realise around £4m over the next few years) would be used for social housing.

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

60. **Revenue Budget: 2013/14 (C2502)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 17) concerning the Council's revenue budget for 2013-14.

Prior to the debate on this item taking place it was agreed that in accordance with paragraph 4.5.12 of the Council's Constitution the speaking limits for this item would be amended.

Councillor Hilary Cole left the meeting at 8.16pm and returned at 8.17pm.

Councillor David Betts left the meeting at 8.17pm and returned at 8.20pm.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Gordon Lundie and seconded by Councillor Alan Law:

That the Council:

1. "notes that at its meeting on 17th January 2013 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2013/2014 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (by the Localism Act 2011):-
 - (a) 59,884.24 being the amount calculated by the Council, (Item T) in accordance with regulation 31B of the Local Authorities Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011), as its council tax base for the year.
 - (b) Part of the Council's area as per Appendix N being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a parish precept relates.
2. Calculates that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2013/14 (excluding Parish precepts) is £75,660,209
3. Calculates that the following amounts for the year 2013/2014 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, amended by the Localism Act 2011:-
 - (a) £296,206,485 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils
 - (b) (£217,185,851) being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act
 - (c) £79,020,634 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above, exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year (Item R)

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- (d) £1,319.56 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by 1(a) above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the 'basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
 - (e) £3,360,425 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per Appendix N).
 - (f) £1,263.44 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relates.
4. Notes that for the year 2013/2014 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley & The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Councils area as indicated in Appendix N.
5. In accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables in Appendix N as the amounts of Council Tax for 2013/14 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.”

In introducing the item Councillor Lundie reflected on the Union's comments that had been circulated to all Members electronically prior to the meeting. He felt that the comment about cuts to services provided to vulnerable people did not resonate with the proposals in the MTFs, Capital Programme and Revenue Budget and he had raised this issue with the Unions earlier that afternoon.

Councillor Lundie reported that the proposals included provision for a 1% increase in salaries for staff. Members allowances were index linked to the rate used for Local Government employees. Following discussions with the Leader of the Opposition it had been agreed that Members would forego this increase and that the sum would be placed in reserves until it was decided how it could be best utilised.

Councillor Manohar Gopal left the meeting at 8.19pm and returned at 8.22pm.

Councillor Lundie noted that the Revenue budget would total £129m which was a reduction on the budget for the previous financial year. He regretted having to increase council tax by 2% but explained that it was inevitable in order to continue to deliver the services as set out in his group's manifesto. Savings had been delivered by capping expenditure limits within individual services, making increased use of shared services where appropriate, and improving procurement thereby circumventing the need to make significant cuts in services.

Councillor Alan Law seconded the motion.

AMENDMENT: Proposed by Councillor Alan Law and seconded by Councillor Irene Neill:

That the Council:

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“In responding to the recently reduced level of Education Services Grant (estimated at circa £850k) when compared to the grant previously received as part of formula grant, the Education service have come forward with a number of further savings proposals over the next 2 years in the region of £450k.

We estimate £200k of these will be found in 2013/14 through greater efficiencies and rationalisation of services. However, it is also our intention to recycle this back into measures to improve schools performance.

The proceeds from the second year of savings will help to assist funding the delivery of further savings required as set out in the Council’s MTFS.

The service has also agreed to bring forward a £100k saving originally planned for 2015/16 into 2014/15.”

Councillor Alan Law in proposing the amendment noted that quite late in the process of producing the Revenue Budget the Council had been informed that it would be receiving £850k less in the Educational Grant than it had in the previous year. Discussions had taken place with the Education Service who identified £200k that could be used to address this shortfall. As it had been agreed that improving education was one of the Council’s priorities it had been agreed that the £200k would be included in the Education Improvement Programme and that the shortfall would instead be funded from Council Tax contributions.

Councillor Irene Neill in seconding the amendment noted that the revised Ofsted inspection regime was focusing on new areas which was making it difficult for some schools previously being graded as satisfactory to achieve the good rating that was now required. Councillor Neill acknowledged that the School Improvement Team had been downsized following the cessation of external funding for some posts and also due to the service being required to meet savings targets.

Councillor Neill was therefore pleased to have the additional £200k to address emerging issues. It had been agreed that the finding would not be used to fund posts but would instead be used on an ad hoc basis for example bringing in specialists when the need arose and to provide additional training for school governors. She welcomed this flexible approach which could be used alongside the existing strong team to achieve attainment levels the district was capable of achieving.

The Amendment was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

Councillor Jeff Brooks in responding the motion introduced the Liberal Democrat amendment to the Revenue Budget.

AMENDMENT: Proposed by Councillor Jeff Brooks and seconded by Councillor David Rendel:

That the Council:

- “Recruit 2 school improvement advisors at a cost of £116,000
- Not introduce on-street parking charges in Newbury, thereby losing estimated income of £30,000 (£25,000 net of the capital charge against revenue)
- Retain the second Handyman for the elderly at a cost of £32,000

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This programme will cost an additional £173,000 in revenue, offset by £364,000 of extra savings and additional income, £200,000 from general reserves and £359,000 from the Economic Downturn Provision. This will be provided by taking the savings and disinvestment measures listed in the table below.

	Cut/Additional Income proposed in Administration Budget	Lib Dem Proposals: Amounts to be retained
Education and YP		
2 X School improvement advisors		116000
Adult Social Care		
Reinstate service dis-investment – Handy man	32000	32000
Highways and Transport		
On Street Parking Charges (net) in Newbury	25000	25000
Total	57000	173000
The spending above will be funded as follows:		
Car Parking Charges – see Appendix C		128000
Replacing some Library Assistants with volunteers (assumes a 1 st July implementation after staff consultation		37000
Internet Charges in Libraries		15000
Chief Executive Contingency fund		30000
Additional income from Utilities/fines from highways		40000
Income from Mobile phone re- charging		9000
Reversal of Accruals		55000
Property Maintenance reduction		50000
Total		364000
Balance of Savings		191000
Make-up of £750,000 savings required to reduce the council budget increase to £0 in order to qualify for the £1.5M Government grant:		
	Balance of Savings (see above)	191000
	From General Reserves	200000
	From the Economic Development Fund	359000
	Total	750000

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In commenting on the Amendment Councillor Brooks noted that the Opposition were concerned that the savings proposals would affect vulnerable people despite the fact that the paperwork stated that the proposals would have little or no impact. He was also concerned that £155k of the proposals were for unspecified schemes.

Councillor Irene Neill left the meeting at 8.35pm and returned at 8.40pm.

Councillor Brooks asked Members to reconsider the proposal to remove funding for the second handyman as he felt that it would be difficult for some vulnerable residents to access this type of service at a cost they could afford.

Councillor David Holtby left the meeting at 8.36pm and returned at 8.41pm.

Councillor Brooks reported that he was concerned that the authority was not seeking to use all of the Discretionary Housing Grant that was available to them and also felt that the administration should not be increasing Council Tax when it had funds available in its reserves that could be utilised instead.

Councillor David Allen noted the need to focus on education and lamented that the School Advisory Team had been disbanded two years previously. He felt that it was essential that two school improvement advisors be recruited to address some of the attainment issues being experienced in West Berkshire.

Councillor Keith Woodhams was concerned about the impact on local businesses of introducing on street car parking charges in Newbury and therefore urged members not to vote in favour of the proposal to introduce it. He was also concerned about the impact making a decision at this meeting would have on the outcome of the consultation exercise that was being undertaken on this matter.

Councillor Joe Mooney noted, in respect of the handyman proposal, that the service was provided by Age UK and they had been made aware that the funding was temporary and that it could be withdrawn at any time. The impact of the withdrawal of this funding was that residents would have to wait longer for the service although they would have the ability to seek an alternate provider.

Councillor Alan Law was concerned about the proposal to use reserves to fund the amendments as he felt that the use suggested over the previous few years by the Liberal Democrats would have depleted the reserves. He also drew Members attention to the S151 Officer's comments on potential funding gaps in 2014/15 and 2015/16 should the suggested amendments be approved.

Councillor Emma Webster noted that although the amendment suggested that the on street car parking in Newbury should not be introduced the alternate budget made provision for an additional £128k of income to be generated from increased car parking tariffs in the Newbury Central, Outer and Coach Parks and from increased charges in respect of season tickets. This was likely to impact on footfall in the town. The amendment also referred to additional income of £15k being generated by income from charging for internet usage in libraries. Councillor Webster opined that this charge was likely to impact on some of the districts most vulnerable residents.

Councillor David Rendel explained that the increased car parking tariffs would only be applied to the long stay car parks which would not affect shoppers and therefore would not impact negatively on businesses in the town. He also explained that as proposals to

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use reserves in previous years had been rejected the proposals in this budget should not be considered on a cumulative basis. He suggested that if Members had accepted the proposal to charge for homes that stood empty for less than four weeks the Council would only have had to raise Council Tax by 1.5% and that this could be delayed until 2015/16. Council Rendel urged Members to use the reserves to fund the proposals and explained that the sheet tabled at the meeting explained how the shortfall referred to by the S151 Officer could be met.

Councillor Jeff Brooks reported that this was an opportune time to use the Council's reserves and therefore urged Council to support the amendment.

Councillor Virginia von Celsing left the meeting at 9.08pm and returned at 9.10pm.

Councillor Gordon Lundie speaking as the proposer of the original motion clarified the issue in respect of on street parking by explaining that a vote tonight was not agreement to implement the scheme. Comments arising from the consultation would be taken on board before a final decision was arrived at. Should it be determined that the scheme should not be implemented the Highways Team would have to find the £30k income shortfall from elsewhere. Councillor Lundie raised concerns about the savings proposals in relation to libraries, the handyman, parking charges and use of reserves in the amendment and therefore asked Council to vote against it.

The Amendment was put to the vote and declared **LOST**.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.17.3 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Amendment be recorded.

FOR the Motion:

Councillors David Allen, Jeff Brooks, Billy Drummond, Roger Hunneman, Royce Longton, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, David Rendel, Julian Swift-Hook, Tony Vickers, Keith Woodhams (11)

AGAINST the Motion:

Councillors Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell, David Betts, Dominic Boeck, Paul Bryant, Virginia von Celsing, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Richard Crumly, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hewer, David Holtby, John Horton, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Mike Johnson, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Joe Mooney, Irene Neill, Andrew Rowles, Garth Simpson, Ieuan Tuck, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster, Laszlo Zverko (34)

ABSTAINED:

Adrian Edwards (1)

Discussions then returned to the substantive motion as amended. Councillor Graham Jones stated that the proposed Revenue Budget underpinned the Administration's commitment to preserve services and keep Council Tax low. This had to be achieved in light of ongoing reductions in government grants and some uncertainty on future responsibilities for the Council (for example the responsibilities the Council might incur in respect of the Dilnot report). Councillor Alan Law explained that reserves should be used to fund one off unexpected events and not to fund ongoing revenue costs.

Councillor Gordon Lundie explained that the Council had to identify around £17m over the next three years which meant that difficult choices had to be made. Councillor Lundie sought to put the Council Tax increase into context by explaining that a 2% increase amounted to 47p per week for a Band D property. While he acknowledged that this might cause difficulties for some residents he was sure that the majority of residents would accept it in order to protect services.

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

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.17.3 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Motion be recorded.

FOR the Motion:

Councillors Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, Brian Bedwell, David Betts, Dominic Boeck, Paul Bryant, Virginia von Celsing, Keith Chopping, Hilary Cole, Roger Croft, Richard Crumly, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hower, David Holtby, John Horton, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Mike Johnson, Graham Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Joe Mooney, Irene Neill, Andrew Rowles, Garth Simpson, Ieuan Tuck, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster, Laszlo Zverko (34)

AGAINST the Motion:

Councillors David Allen, Jeff Brooks, Billy Drummond, Roger Hunneman, Royce Longton, Gwen Mason, Geoff Mayes, David Rendel, Julian Swift-Hook, Tony Vickers, Keith Woodhams (11)

ABSTAINED:

Adrian Edwards (1)

61. Statutory Pay Policy Statement (C2597)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 18) concerning the Council's pay policy statement which had to be published by the 01 April 2013.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Alan Law and seconded by Councillor Laszlo Zverko:

That the Council:

"approves the Pay Policy Statement".

Councillor Alan Law in introducing this item explained that the Council was required to publish this information as part of the Government's drive to increase transparency in Local Government.

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

62. Health and Wellbeing Strategy (C2581)

(Councillor David Rendel declared a personal interest in Agenda item 19 by virtue of the fact that his wife was a local GP. As his interest was personal and not a disclosable pecuniary interest he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 19) concerning the emerging priorities within the first Health and Wellbeing Strategy which had been adopted by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its meeting on the 28 February 2013.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Graham Jones and seconded by Councillor Quentin Webb:

That the Council:

"agrees the health and Wellbeing Strategy and the emerging priorities for 2013/14".

Councillor Graham Jones in introducing the report explained that the Strategy fell within the remit of the Health and Wellbeing Board. It was an organic document which would be updated on an ongoing basis. He would therefore take on board the comments from Councillor Lundie about health issues arising from alcohol misuse.

Councillor Jones reiterated that the integration of Public Health into the Council would be one of the challenges for the forthcoming year. Good relationships were being built up

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with the Clinical Commissioning Groups who were eager to consider some of the broader determinants of health under the auspices of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board.

Councillor Richard Crumly left the meeting at 9.44pm.

Councillor David Allen offered support for the strategy accepting that it was an organic document. He also requested that consideration be given to including reference to homelessness in the document.

Councillor Tony Linden left the meeting at 9.44pm and returned at 9.45pm

Councillor Manohar Gopal left the meeting at 9.45pm and returned at 9.46pm

Councillor Jones agreed to take away this issues raised at the meeting and to feed them into discussions on the evolving document which would seek to take into account the broader determinants of health as it became embedded.

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

63. Localisation of Council Tax Support - Detailed Administration of the West Berkshire Scheme (C2611)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 20) concerning the administration process associated with the newly adopted Council Tax Support Scheme.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Alan Law and seconded by Councillor Roger Croft:

That the Council:

1. “adopts the detailed administrative arrangements as currently set out for the default scheme in SI 2012 No.2886 except and in so far as the Council's policy decision on 13th December 2012 provided otherwise.
2. in the event of amendment to SI 2012 No. 2886, the Councils own scheme be similarly amended except and in so far as the Council's policy decision on 13th December 2012 provides otherwise”.

Councillor Alan Law in introducing the paper noted that the principles behind the scheme had been agreed at the Council meeting in December 2012. The Council now had a statutory duty to agree the administrative processes to underpin the scheme.

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

64. Members' Questions

- (a) A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of speed enforcement on roads without speed limits was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Property, Highways and Transport.
- (b) A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of usage of the park and Stride facility at the Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Countryside, Environmental Protection, ‘Cleaner and Greener’, Culture and Customer Services.
- (c) A question standing in the name of Councillor Gwen Mason on the subject of the impact of the Housing Allocations Policy on families with a disabled child was answered by the Portfolio Holder for the Council Strategy & Performance, Housing, ICT, Corporate Support, Strategic Support and Legal.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 9.51pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature