

# **EXECUTIVE**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**

### **THURSDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**Councillors Present:** Pamela Bale, Dominic Boeck, Hilary Cole, Marcus Franks, Gordon Lundie, Joe Mooney and Irene Neill

**Also Present:** John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Steve Broughton (Head of Culture & Environmental Protection), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Melanie Ellis (Chief Accountant), Keith Ulyatt (Public Relations Manager), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Councillor David Allen, Councillor Jeff Brooks, Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Councillor Roger Hunneman, Councillor Royce Longton, Councillor Gwen Mason, Linda Pye (Policy Officer), Robin Steel (Group Executive (Cons)) and Councillor Keith Woodhams

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Roger Croft, Councillor Alan Law and Councillor Graham Pask

#### **PART I**

##### **22. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2014 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

Councillor Gordon Lundie announced that Councillor Joe Mooney had taken the decision to step down as the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Insurance. Councillor Lundie registered his thanks for Councillor Mooney's commitment, hard work and excellent service over his 12 years as first Shadow Portfolio Holder and then Portfolio Holder. He had played a very important role on the Executive and would be missed.

Councillor Mooney's replacement on the Executive would be announced shortly.

Councillor Roger Hunneman stated his appreciation for Councillor Mooney's work and added that they had always had a cordial working relationship.

##### **23. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

##### **24. Public Questions**

There were no public questions submitted.

##### **25. Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

##### **26. Response to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission Review into the utilisation of Shaw House (EX2874)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) which outlined responses to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Task Group in respect of the utilisation of Shaw House.

By way of background, Councillor Hilary Cole advised that a small Member group had originally been formed which had concluded that a Business Plan be produced for Shaw House in order to maximise its use. This was shortly followed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) agreeing, in May 2013, to form a Task Group to conduct a review into the utilisation of Shaw House, its costs etc. The Task

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Group review had now concluded and had included consideration of the draft Business Plan. Many of the scrutiny recommendations related to the development of the Business Plan.

The final report of the task group, which had been presented to the OSMC on 20 May 2014, took the view that the overall thrust of the proposed Business Plan appeared to be sound and should go some way to significantly increasing the potential and utility of Shaw House.

Councillor Jeff Brooks gave his thanks to Councillor Cole for her involvement at the meetings of the Task Group which he felt helped the process. He was also pleased to note that many of the OSMC's recommendations were agreed. However, in some cases the recommendations were 'not agreed' and Councillor Brooks felt this was concerning. The scrutiny review did note that there were plans to reduce the operating subsidy of Shaw House in the coming years, but Councillor Brooks questioned whether the plans to do so were sufficiently ambitious. He was of the view that a more enterprising and bold approach could serve to further improve the financial position of Shaw House.

Councillor Gordon Lundie acknowledged the points made by Councillor Brooks and agreed the importance of utilising this very good cultural and heritage asset to the benefit of West Berkshire. However, the increased commercial use of Shaw House was a challenge when considering the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund and Shaw House Trustees.

Councillor Brooks then referred to the OSMC recommendation to increase the marketing budget by at least £20k per annum. This recommendation was 'not agreed' and Councillor Brooks felt that this was an example of a lack of ambition by the Council. He felt that improved signage to Shaw House would be beneficial and made the point that Shaw House was a unique facility that should be utilised more fully.

Councillor Cole also advised that she agreed with many of the points made by Councillor Brooks, but she also appreciated the views given by Officers. She felt there was potential to increase the use of Shaw House as a wedding venue, but this was currently a difficult market place. Such a move would also involve the relocation of the Registration Service away from Shaw House and this would take time to achieve due to the statutory notice period required of 12 months. Councillor Cole also accepted that the requested increase to the marketing budget was relatively small, but additional funding was not available.

Councillor Cole then went on to advise that Amanda Loaring had recently left the post of Heritage Manager after many years good service and put on record her thanks for Amanda's hard work. A new Manager was to be appointed who would be able to bring different ideas and a different perspective moving forward. Councillor Cole stated that she would continue to work closely with Officers with a view to continuing to develop the utilisation of Shaw House. Councillor Brooks offered his involvement in the recruitment process for the Heritage Manager.

**RESOLVED** that the Officer's response to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission's recommendations be agreed.

**Reason for the decision:** To provide a response to the OSMC recommendations.

**Other options considered:** As set out in the report.

### 27. **Financial Performance Report 2014-15 Quarter One (EX2829)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning the latest financial performance of the Council. As at Quarter One, the forecast revenue position was an overspend of £199,679. Councillor Gordon Lundie advised that the Quarter One financial

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performance report often forecasted an overspend position but challenges would be managed and it was hoped that the overspend could be reduced in the coming quarter.

Councillor Gordon Lundie stated that in Communities, Children's Services were forecasting an overspend of £220k. There was a forecast pressure of £448k in placement budgets. However, the overall pressure was being reduced by underspends in Early Intervention Services resulting from increased contributions from Public Health. Education was forecasting an overspend of £81k in the areas of Disabled Children's Placements and Pre School Teacher Counselling.

The Environment Directorate was forecasting an underspend of £2k despite minor pressures in Planning and Countryside and Culture and Environmental Protection, these had been offset by small savings in Highways and Transport.

The Resources Directorate was forecasting an underspend of £100k largely due to additional income and salary savings in Strategic Support.

Levies and Interest was currently forecasting on line.

Of the total capital programme of £38.3m, 24.5% had been committed at the end of Quarter One. Approximately £2.4m of the programme was expected to be re-profiled to 2015/16. The free schools meal programme had been put in place despite it not being fully funded and the Council had had to pick up an additional £600k of expenditure. Councillor Lundie confirmed that the Council had written to the Minister about the lack of funding but he commended the work which had been undertaken by Officers to implement the policy on time.

Councillor Jeff Brooks referred to page 25 of the agenda where the budget, actuals and commitments had been set out in a table. A similar table used to be provided in relation to the revenue budget but this seemed to have been replaced by the table on page 23 which did not contain as much comparative data. Councillor Brooks asked if that table could be reinstated in future reports. Melanie Ellis stated that a decision had been taken to show just the key data but she confirmed that the more comprehensive table could be reinstated if that was what Members wished.

**RESOLVED that** the report be noted.

**Reason for the decision:** To ensure that Members are fully aware of the latest financial position of the Council.

**Other options considered:** None.

### 28. **Council Performance Report 2014/15:Q1 (Key Accountable Measures and Activities) (EX2777)**

Councillor Gordon Lundie introduced the report (Agenda Item 8) which outlined quarter one outturns against the key accountable measures and activities contained in the 2014/15 Council performance framework, and which reported by exception those measures/activities not achieved and cited remedial action taken and its impact.

The report set out progress against a basket of 53 key accountable measures and activities aligned to the objectives set out in the Council Strategy. Of the 53 reported measures, outturns were available for 37 with 27 being reported as 'green' and 10 as 'amber'. No measures had been reported as 'red'. Councillor Lundie advised that the basket of measures and activities had been informed by a review of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Detail was provided in the report on ways to try and improve the performance of the 10 measures reported as 'amber', but in summary these were as follows:

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### Children and Young People:

- Looked After Children cases which were reviewed within required timescales
- Child Protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales

### Older People and Vulnerable Adults:

- Proportion of adults with a learning disability who lived in their own home or with their family
- Proportion of repeat safeguarding referrals through the monitoring and review of protection plans
- Level of delayed transfers of care from hospital and those attributable to social care from acute and non-acute settings
- Percentage of people presenting as homeless where the homelessness had been relieved or prevented
- Average number of days taken to make a full decision on new benefit claims
- Average number of days taken to make a full decision on changes in a benefit claimant's circumstances

### Planning:

- Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks
- Minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks

Councillor Lundie also drew attention to some of the contextual and volume measures provided in the report:

- A reducing number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants.
- An increasing number of visitors to sports and leisure centres.
- An increase in the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans.
- An increasing number of Freedom of Information requests.

Councillor Roger Hunneman noted that there had been a 19% decrease in Newbury Town Centre footfall compared to a year ago and requested further information on this measure. Councillor Lundie offered to provide a written answer on this point.

There had also been a decrease in the net change of the number of properties in West Berkshire and Councillor Hunneman sought a greater explanation of this measure. Councillor Lundie agreed to provide a written answer on this point.

Councillor Hunneman then referred to the measure to decrease the level of delayed transfers of care (DTOC) from hospitals and those attributable to social care from acute and non-acute settings, and questioned the accuracy of the data.

In terms of the performance level, Councillor Lundie advised that this was improving and West Berkshire compared well with its neighbouring local authorities. He did however accept that further improvements needed to be made.

Rachael Wardell confirmed that this measure provided a snapshot position of performance based on the number of patients (per 100,000 aged 18+) delayed at a certain point in time and she agreed to confirm its accuracy. Rachael Wardell also reported that West Berkshire's performance in this area had significantly improved and efforts would continue.

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Councillor Joe Mooney reported that the figures included a number of people who funded their own care and this was a factor which contributed to DTOC with 'self funders' and their families wanting to wait until a desired care home/care package had been secured. It was extremely difficult to separate self funders from those in receipt of Council funding when collating data.

Councillor Hunneman asked whether it was possible to identify the proportion of self funders and Rachael Wardell agreed to establish whether or not this could be provided routinely. She did however report that the majority of people delayed in hospital on any given day usually were self funders.

Councillor Lundie added that DTOC was an important area of focus that would continue to be scrutinised.

Councillor Gwen Mason was concerned to note that both smoking prevalence in the adult population and the number of alcohol related admissions to hospital was showing an increase, particularly when considering the extent of preventative work undertaken in these areas. Councillor Marcus Franks clarified that the figures in the report related to the 2012/13 financial year and was hopeful that 2013/14 figures would show an improvement when considering the preventative work.

Councillor David Allen referred to the graph which reported on the prevalence of excess weight in children and pointed out that the line in the graph and associated figures for children aged 10-11 did not correlate. Councillor Franks agreed to confirm the correct position.

Councillor Allen then drew attention to the measure which reported the percentage of posts filled by agency workers in Children's Services. This showed a 10% increase from the position reported a year ago and he requested an update on the situation. In response, Councillor Irene Neill referred to the Children's Services Recruitment and Retention Strategy (agreed at the last meeting of the Executive) which sought to resolve this issue.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The basket of published Key Accountable measures for 2014/.15 be approved;
- Progress against the key accountable measures and activities be noted;
- Those areas reporting as 'red' or 'amber' be reviewed to ensure that appropriate or corrective or remedial action was put in place.

**Reason for the decision:** This framework compiles and monitors progress in relation to the objectives laid out in the Council Strategy and on key activities and areas of risk from the Council's individual service delivery plans.

In doing so, it expresses the purpose and ambition of the Council and by extension the Council's main focus of activities and key measures of success against which it could assess itself and publicly report progress.

**Other options considered:** n/a

## 29. **Members' Questions**

- (a) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of the number of appeals there have been against fines on Parkway Bridge was answered by

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the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision.

- (b) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of successful appeals against fines on Parkway Bridge was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision.

- (c) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of the administrative cost of processing appeals on Parkway Bridge was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision.

- (d) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Insurance submitted by Councillor Gwen Mason**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Gwen Mason on the subject of an advocacy policy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Insurance.

- (e) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Insurance submitted by Councillor Gwen Mason**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Gwen Mason on the subject of the frequency of the Council's inspection of residential care homes where West Berkshire residents were placed was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Insurance.

- (f) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Insurance submitted by Councillor Gwen Mason**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Gwen Mason on the subject of whether inspections of care homes were sufficiently rigorous was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Insurance.

- (g) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of authorisation for BT to dig up the Council's highway was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operations), Emergency Planning, Newbury Vision.

### 30. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the [Local Government \(Access to Information\)\(Variation\) Order 2006](#). [Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.](#)

### 31. **Leisure Centre Contract - Extension**

*(Paragraph 3 – information relating to financial/business affairs of a particular person)*

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The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 11) concerning the extension of the current contract by a further five years to realise savings.

**RESOLVED that** the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

**Reason for the decision:** as set out in the exempt report.

**Other options considered:** as set out in the exempt report.

*(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 6.03pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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