

EXECUTIVE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY, 30 JUNE 2016

Councillors Present: Dominic Boeck, Anthony Chadley, Hilary Cole, Lynne Doherty, Marcus Franks, James Fredrickson, Graham Jones and Alan Law

Also Present: Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Sarah Clarke (Legal Services Manager), Peta Stoddart-Crompton (Public Relations Officer), Andy Walker (Head of Finance) and Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities), Steve Broughton (Head of Culture & Environmental Protection), Stephen Chard (Policy Officer), Councillor Lee Dillon (Shadow Executive Portfolio: Finance, Strategy & Performance, Economic Development, Property, Partnerships, Equality, Human Resources, Thatcham Vision, Pensions, Insurance, Health & Safety), Councillor Alan Macro (Shadow Executive Portfolio: Planning, Housing, Countryside, Waste, Strategic Support, Culture, Eastern Area Vision, ICT & Corporate Support, Emergency Planning, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Legal, Customer Services, Community Safety) and Councillor Richard Somner (Council Member)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Roger Croft and Councillor Garth Simpson

(Councillor Graham Jones in the Chair)

PART I

10. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2016 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Deputy Leader.

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

12. Public Questions

There were no public questions submitted.

13. Petitions

Councillor Alan Macro presented a petition, on behalf of Ms Lisa Cox, containing 628 signatures requesting that West Berkshire Council reverse its decision to not pay the re3 subsidy payment which would mean that West Berkshire residents could no longer use the Smallmead Household Waste Recycling Centre. Petitioners felt it unfair that residents on the outside edges of West Berkshire should be made to travel a further 30 miles to dispose of waste and there was concern that a steep increase in fly tipping could result.

The petition was referred to Officers in Culture and Environmental Protection, and Finance for a response.

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(Post meeting note: the decision to withdraw from the re3 waste partnership was taken at the Special Council meeting held on 24 March 2016 as part of setting the Council's 2016/17 budget. The Council's Constitution did not permit decisions made within the previous six months to be returned to and therefore the petition could not be considered until that six month time period had elapsed, i.e. the end of September 2016).

14. **Provisional Financial Outturn Report - 2015/16 (EX3022)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning the provisional financial outturn for the Council in respect of the 2015-16 financial year, subject to the final result of the closedown and External Audit process.

Councillor Graham Jones introduced the report and explained that total capital expenditure in 2015-16 was £38.5m, with an under spend of £6.7m against the revised budget of £45.2m. The budget was revised during the course of the year to take account of funds brought forward from 2014-15, additional grant and section 106 funding allocated to schemes during the year and funds re-profiled into 2016-17, and these changes had been explained in the quarterly budget monitoring reports provided to the Executive. The Capital Strategy Group had recommended that £6.6m of the overall underspend should be carried forward to enable schemes already underway to be completed and/or to meet future capital commitments.

The total revenue expenditure in 2015-16 was £125m, with a provisional year end overspend of £115k or 0.09% of net budget which would lead to a reduction in the General Fund. Councillor Jones felt this was a considerable achievement when considering the financial pressures felt during 2015-16 and Officers were thanked for their efforts in achieving this outturn. Investment had also been made into Children and Family Services during 2015-16 in response to the Ofsted Inspection. This investment was helping to achieve positive results.

Councillor Jones explained that at Quarter Three, the forecast Year End position for the Council was an overspend of £625k, but through a deliberate slowing of non-essential expenditure across services, the corporate position had been reduced to the Year End provisional overspend of £115k.

Councillor Jones then reported that increasing demand across social care budgets during 2015-16 had put the Council's resources under considerable strain. This budget pressure included the burden of meeting the requirements of the Care Act. Councillor Jones explained that efforts continued to engage Central Government on the issue of appropriate funding to implement the requirements of the Care Act.

It was also noted that the Council had made significant investment into identified pressure points as part of the 2016-17 budget process.

Councillor Hilary Cole agreed that the 2015/16 budget had been well managed in what were difficult financial times and staff should be congratulated. Social care staff had done particularly well when considering increasing levels of demand.

Councillor Alan Macro queried whether it was the expectation that budget overspends were likely to continue in Children and Family Services. Councillor Lynne Doherty responded by advising that this was not the expectation. She added that while social care services were demand led, the number of Looked After Children and children subject to a Child Protection Plan had reduced post the production of the Council's Ofsted Improvement Plan.

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Councillor Macro then referred to the underspend reported for the Environment Directorate and queried whether this was contributed to by the mild winter experienced. Councillor Jones agreed that a written response would be provided on this point from the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Emergency Planning.

Councillor Lee Dillon referred to the retention of local business rates and queried whether an increase in income could be achieved from this in future. Nick Carter explained that assumptions had been made on business rate growth and this was an area regularly reviewed. While, as stated in the report, this was a volatile area, historically West Berkshire had a trend of growth and it was hoped that this would continue. In response to this, Councillor Dillon referred to the point made in the report that growth in local business rate retention had stagnated and he therefore questioned the points made by the Chief Executive. Andy Walker agreed that this was a volatile area and there had been some one off pressures during 2015-16 which had impacted on growth, but it was hoped that a more stable position could be maintained moving forward.

RESOLVED that:

- Members were fully aware of the provisional financial outturn of the Council.
- The budget movements processed in year, detailed in Appendix D, be noted.

Reason for the decision: To inform Members of the provisional financial outturn of the Council for 2015-16.

Other options considered: None.

15. The Household Waste Recycling Centre Service (EX3123a)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) which sought approval for proposals to mitigate against the effects of the end of the cross border arrangement by Hampshire County Council for their residents to use West Berkshire Council's Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) service, and the decision to cease the arrangement with the re3 partnership (which consisted of Bracknell Forest, Reading and Wokingham Councils) which enabled West Berkshire residents to use the Smallmead HWRC.

Councillor Marcus Franks explained that from 1 April 2016, Hampshire County Council, having given notice, ended their financial contributions to allow Hampshire's residents access to the Padworth and Newtown Road HWRCs. Currently Hampshire residents were still using West Berkshire's HWRCs.

To mitigate against the loss of income from Hampshire County Council, it was proposed that access to the West Berkshire HWRC sites be controlled by the implementation of a resident permit scheme and restricting access to commercial vehicles.

At the Special Council Meeting on 24 March 2016 the Council decided to end the arrangement with re3 and cease the Council's contribution of £460,000 at a time when significant savings had to be found. Therefore, three months notice had been given to re3 which would end the agreement on the 30 June 2016. re3 had responded by introducing controls to stop residents from West Berkshire using their facility from the 1 July 2016. The disposal of waste by West Berkshire residents at this facility would need to be managed through the Council's waste services.

Councillor Franks pointed out that significant efforts had been made with the re3 waste partnership with a view to reducing costs and avoiding this situation prior to this decision being made in March 2016.

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To mitigate against the impact on residents, following the decision by the re3 partnership to close access to West Berkshire residents, it was proposed that the possibility of extending the service at the Padworth HWRC should be explored with the Council's Waste Management contractor (Veolia).

Councillor Franks urged those residents who had utilised the Smallmead HWRC to date to make use of the Padworth HWRC for recyclable waste, the Newtown Road HWRC for both recyclable and non-recyclable waste, as well as utilising roadside recycling and bulky waste collections.

Councillor Franks then made reference to the petition submitted earlier in the meeting which requested that the Council reverse its decision to not pay the re3 subsidy payment, thereby allowing continued access to the Smallmead HWRC. Councillor Franks gave the view that it would be difficult to reverse this decision as the financial saving had been incorporated in the 2016/17 budget and if the decision was reversed, then an alternative saving would need to be found from elsewhere within the Council's budget.

Concern was also raised in the petition of a potential steep increase in fly tipping. Councillor Franks stated that the Council would be vigilant on the offence of fly tipping and would prosecute offenders. However, he expected that residents would continue to dispose of their waste responsibly.

Councillor Alan Macro highlighted that discussions with Veolia should have been progressed with a greater level of urgency when considering that West Berkshire residents would be unable to access the Smallmead facility from 1 July 2016. He questioned when an extension to the Padworth HWRC could be achieved.

Councillor Franks explained that considerations had been ongoing in relation to Padworth, there had however been issues to resolve with the planning application. The decision to withdraw funding from re3 had been brought forward due to the need to identify savings, before Padworth discussions were able to conclude. The decision made by Hampshire County Council was a contributing financial factor.

Once the planning application had been submitted to Veolia, it would be subject to a 13 week planning process, but this would not commence until decisions had been taken by the Executive. Subject to planning permission being granted, it was anticipated that works to make Padworth a full waste site would take up to six months to complete.

Councillor Macro gave the view that it would have been preferable to continue to pay re3 until the Padworth extension had been completed.

Councillor Macro then stated the view that a greater level of publicity was needed to inform members of the public of these developments. Councillor Franks advised that communications had taken place in the form of newspaper advertisements, information had been made available in libraries, leisure centres and on the Council website, information had also been shared with all parish councils and Ward Members. Communications would continue. Councillor Franks added that developments were also being promoted by re3.

Councillor Graham Jones pointed out that cross border arrangements of this type were coming to a close across the country and added that Councillor Franks, with Officers, was looking to find solutions for West Berkshire's residents without incurring additional cost.

Councillor Franks then gave thanks to Councillor Macro for his well balanced and factual letter on this matter which had been published in the Newbury Weekly News.

Councillor Macro asked whether information to confirm these altered arrangements would be provided to householders on their waste bins as efforts were needed to avoid

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residents being turned away at the Smallmead site. Councillor Franks confirmed this was the intention and this would take place late July/early August 2016 to coincide with information being provided on collection date changes due to the August Bank Holiday.

Councillor Macro then queried the estimated cost of implementing the residents permit scheme and of enforcing this. Councillor Franks confirmed that the detail of this would be worked upon with Veolia, subject to Executive approval, but costs had already been estimated of £9,000. Councillor Franks also gave an assurance that the necessary information would be sent to each household on this development.

Councillor Lee Dillon felt that following the completion of works to make Padworth a full waste site, the use of the Padworth HWRC was likely to increase and bring with that an increase in traffic movements. He queried whether an increased use of both the Padworth and Newtown Road HWRCs could be accommodated. Councillor Franks responded that Padworth and Newtown Road had additional capacity.

Councillor Dillon then queried whether staffing levels would increase at the HWRCs. Councillor Franks explained that this was an aspect which formed part of the discussions with Veolia, but the expectation was that levels of service would be maintained.

Councillor Anthony Chadley made the point that many residents living in the east of the district utilised the Smallmead site. However, access to Smallmead was not straightforward and Councillor Chadley felt that the Padworth HWRC was accessible to residents living in the east of the district.

RESOLVED that:

- new measures would be introduced to control access to the Council's HWRC services; including a resident permit scheme and a booking system for residents using commercial type vehicles.
- the extension of the Padworth HWRC service in conjunction with the above point would be explored with the Council's Waste Management Contractor.

Reason for the decision: To mitigate the effects of the closure of access for West Berkshire Residents to the Smallmead HWRC.

Other options considered: As set out in Appendix D.

16. **Members' Questions**

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

(a) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Protection submitted by Councillor Richard Somner**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Richard Somner on the subject of the launch of the community energy-switching scheme was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Protection.

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- (b) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Protection submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the proportion of non West Berkshire residents using the Council's waste and recycling centres was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Public Protection.

- (c) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Emergency Planning submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the visibility of traffic signs was answered by the Deputy Leader of the Council on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Emergency Planning.

- (d) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Planning submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the adequacy of the Council's planning enforcement resource was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Planning.

17. **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](#).

18. **The Household Waste Recycling Centre Service (EX3123b)**

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

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 10) concerning the budget and service issues in relation to the Household Waste Recycling Centre Service.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Reason for the decision: as detailed in the exempt report.

Other options considered: as detailed in the exempt report.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 5.45 pm)

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CHAIRMAN

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Date of Signature

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