

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY, 1 MARCH 2018

Councillors Present: Steve Ardagh-Walter, Peter Argyle, Howard Bairstow, Jeremy Bartlett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Paul Bryant, Anthony Chadley, Keith Chopping, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, Jason Collis, Richard Crumly, Rob Denton-Powell, Lee Dillon, Lynne Doherty, Adrian Edwards, James Fredrickson, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Carol Jackson-Doerge (Vice-Chairman), Graham Jones, Rick Jones, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Graham Pask, Anthony Pick, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb (Chairman) and Emma Webster

Also Present: Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Sarah Clarke (Acting Head of Legal Services), Shiraz Sheikh (Principal Solicitor), Rachael Wardell (Corporate Director - Communities) and Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Pamela Bale, Councillor James Cole, Councillor Billy Drummond, Councillor Sheila Ellison, Councillor Marcus Franks, Councillor Clive Hooker, Councillor Marigold Jaques, Councillor Mike Johnston, Councillor Alan Law, Councillor Tony Linden, Councillor Mollie Lock, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor Ian Morrin, Councillor James Podger, Councillor Virginia von Celsing and Councillor Laszlo Zverko

Councillor Absent: Councillor Paul Hewer

PART I

77. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman thanked Members, Officers and staff for attending the Council meeting, with particular thanks to the emergency weather contingencies team and all the Highways Officers, staff and partners who were keeping West Berkshire moving and supporting those vulnerable people during the very inclement weather being experienced.

The Chairman stated that he, the Chairman's Lady and the Vice-Chairman had, since the last Council meeting, attended 30 events. He reported that it had been a pleasure representing the Council and some of the memorable events included:

- The very atmospheric York Nativity Play at St. Mary the Virgin Aldermaston
- Hungerford Town Band Christmas Concert
- The Mencap Carol Service at St. Nicolas Church and many more carol services which were each very enjoyable
- The official opening of the Kurtsystems Technology for training race horses at Lambourn and being presented to HRH Princess Anne
- The 75th Commemorative Service of the bombing of Newbury and act of remembrance
- Several Citizenship Ceremonies – an occasion which the Chairman especially enjoyed
- The Flood Alleviation Scheme completion event at Tull Way, Thatcham
- The launch of the Discover Nature Together Project at the Discovery Centre, Thatcham
- Judging the contest of the History Dual between Newbury and Thatcham Towns.

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78. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2017 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Item 70 Adjournment of the Meeting – replace the word ‘Vice-Chairmen’ with the word ‘Chairmen’.

79. Declarations of Interest

The Monitoring Officer announced that in respect of items 16 and 17 (Capital Strategy and Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23 and Revenue Budget 2018/19): all Members had completed an Application for a Grant of a Dispensation in relation to “any beneficial interest in land within the Authority’s area.” The Monitoring Officer had granted the dispensation to allow all Members to speak and vote on this item.

Councillor James Fredrickson was employed by Gigaclear and therefore had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item 16 Capital Strategy and Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23. He therefore left the meeting for that item and did not take part in the debate or vote on the matter.

The Monitoring Officer noted that Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, Jeff Beck, Dominic Boeck, Jason Collis, Richard Crumly, Lynne Doherty, Adrian Edwards, Dave Goff and Anthony Pick had declared a personal interest in item 17 (Revenue Budget 2018/19) by virtue of the fact that they were dual hatted Members (District and Parish Members) and a number of proposals would affect them in that capacity. It was deemed that these interests would be personal.

A number of other personal interests were also declared in relation to Item 16 (Capital Strategy and Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23) and Item 17 (Revenue Budget 2018/19) and these had been displayed in the Council Chamber.

Councillor	Outside Body or Other Organisation
Jeff Beck	West Berkshire Council appointed Trustee of the following Charitable Organisations – The Corn Exchange (Newbury) Trust Limited, Readibus and Volunteer Centre West Berkshire
Jeanette Clifford	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governor and Foundation Governor, St. Bartholomew’s School• Trustee, the Charity of Mrs Mabel Luke• Governor, South Central Ambulance Service
Jason Collis	Substitute on City Deal Joint Committee
Lynne Doherty	Husband co-opted onto Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council
Billy Drummond	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governor at The Willows School• Foundation Governor St. Barts• Director of Greenham Business Park
Rick Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WB Mencap – WBC representative• West Berkshire Disability Alliance
Tim Metcalfe	Trustee of the Adventure Dolphin (Pangbourne)

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Councillor	Outside Body or Other Organisation
	Charity

80. Petitions

There were no petitions submitted to this meeting.

(Councillor David Goff arrived 6.36pm)

81. Public Questions

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

1. A question standing in the name of Mr Peter Norman on the subject of the creation of a number of super boroughs was answered by the Leader of the Council.
2. It was agreed that a question standing in the name of Mr Simon Bowes would receive a written response, given that he was unable to attend the meeting. *(Post meeting note: As he had called to give his apologies his question would be submitted to and be answered at the Executive meeting on 29th March 2018.)*
3. A question standing in the name of Ms Carolyn Culver on the subject of whether the £50 per household annual charge for green waste bin collection would yield a net gain of up to £900,000 was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Environment.
4. A question standing in the name of Ms Carolyn Culver on the subject of whether the £50 per household annual charge for green waste bin collection would contribute to West Berkshire Council and national government commitments to increase rates of recycling was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Environment.
5. A question standing in the name of Mr David Marsh on the subject of a planning application to enhance Newbury Football Club was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Leisure.
6. A question standing in the name of Mr Stephen Masters on the subject of what the Council were doing to ensure that the homelessness and rough sleeping community who were vulnerable were adequately protected was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Leisure.
7. A question standing in the name of Mr Stephen Masters on the subject of the West Berkshire rate of rough sleepers which was 50% worse than the national average was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Leisure.

(Councillor Anthony Stansfeld arrived at 6.41pm)

82. Membership of Committees

No changes to the membership of Committees were proposed.

83. Licensing Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Licensing Committee had met on 7 December 2017.

84. Personnel Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Personnel Committee had met on 12th February 2018.

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85. Governance and Ethics Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Governance and Ethics Committee had met on 7th December 2017, 31st January 2018 and 5th February 2018 respectively.

86. District Planning Committee

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

87. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had met on 9th January 2018.

88. Joint Public Protection Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Joint Public Protection Committee had met on 12th December 2017.

(Councillors Peter Argyle and Manohar Gopal left at 6.55pm)

89. Investment and Borrowing Strategy 2018/19 (C3274)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 14) which set out the Council's borrowing limits as set out by CIPFA's Prudential Code and recommended the Annual Investment Strategy for 2018/19.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Anthony Chadley and seconded by Councillor Jason Collis:

That the Council:

"adopts the 2018/19 Investment and Borrowing Strategy."

Councillor Anthony Chadley stated that the purpose of the Investment and Borrowing Strategy was to confirm the methodology in complying with legislation on how and where the Council borrowed funds. This was scrutinised on a regular basis by the cross party Treasury Management Group, on which he and Councillor Dillon sat. The strategy was to borrow at the most competitive rates and invest surplus funds with the most attractive rates and the report set out prudent measures to ensure risks were minimised.

Councillor Lee Dillon had previously requested during the Executive meeting that the agreement was approved by Treasury Management Group. Councillor Chadley advised that the text was correct as this would require Executive approval, however, this agreement would be scrutinised by the Treasury Management Group prior to it being passed to the Executive for approval and he hoped that this reassured Councillor Dillon.

Councillor Dillon commented that he felt that the Council should have postponed the Council meeting due to the inclement weather and that it should have been rescheduled when it was safer to hold it. The Chairman responded that he had taken advice and it had been agreed that it would not be prudent to move or postpone the meeting.

Councillor Dillon accepted that the NHS Trusts investment was to be subject to an individual lending agreement which would require Executive approval. What he had asked was that the Treasury Management Group should be involved in the due diligence process prior to the Executive decision being taken.

Councillor Chadley summarised that having a sound Investment and Borrowing Strategy ensured West Berkshire could sustain the critical investment in schools, highways and commercial property investment.

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

90. **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21 (C3275)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 15) concerning the rolling three year financial strategy which was designed to ensure that the financial resources, both revenue and capital, were available to deliver the Council Strategy. It enabled the Council to forecast and plan income and expenditure over a longer period than the annual budget. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) should be read in conjunction with the Revenue Budget 2018-19, the Capital Strategy and Investment and Borrowing Strategy reports.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Anthony Chadley and seconded by Councillor Graham Jones:

That the Council:

“approves and adopts the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21.”

Councillor Anthony Chadley reported that the MTFS enabled the Council to forecast and plan income and expenditure over a longer period than the annual budget. It assisted in identifying key areas for income, for example Council Tax and Business Rates against planned expenditure. The table at paragraph 9.2 condensed information from all over the Council into a relatively easy to understand format. It was an essential tool to identify the possibilities of a gap in funding, and set in place strategies on how the Council intended to close that gap and ensure that a balanced budget was set every year.

Lines 12, 13 and 14 represented ‘budget growth’ - what the increase in cost would be for the Council to do the same thing every year, for example wage increases and pension costs, contract inflation, the expected increases in costs due to changes in the number of children with learning difficulties, or elderly residents requiring additional care. All three of these areas were difficult to predict but Councillor Chadley commended Officers and Members for the added modelling that had been undertaken to ensure that data was reliable and that adequate resources were allocated. These items alone equated to an increase of just under £21m to the budget over the next three years.

Line 16 ‘savings or income requirement’ was fully identified for 2018/19 and was contained within the Revenue Budget paper. For 2019 to 2021, the Council had identified significant sums already, however, the MTFS was not the method to analyse those savings and income, but rather a method of recording it.

Councillor Chadley drew attention to paragraph 4.3 on page 44 of the agenda which related to what had become known as ‘Negative Revenue Support Grant’ The formula for calculating Revenue Support Grant had resulted in the Council having to pay Central Government £3.5m over the two years 2019 to 2021. Whilst these figures were contained within the MTFS, the Council strongly contested the rationale behind this, and with the support of the local MPs, and other similarly affected Councils from all political persuasions, would be lobbying to have this removed.

Councillor Chadley also referred to item 4.5 on page 45 of the agenda ‘Retained Business Rates’. He reported that Officers and Members had worked extremely hard to benefit from this pilot. He reminded Members that this was only a one year pilot but that the Council would work to see if it could be extended for an additional year which would then potentially generate a further £2m.

The MTFS also allowed the Council to look at reserves and the Administration had opted to adopt a sensible approach to the use and levels of reserves. The S151 Officer recommended a minimum of 5%. Reserves were there to ensure that the Council could

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meet unexpected and unforeseen demands and pressures and Councillor Chadley was therefore pleased to confirm that the reserves were replenished and maintained at this safe level.

Councillor Lee Dillon questioned the Council Tax Collection Fund deficit/surplus as this was zero in 2019/20 and 2020/21. As a deficit had existed for the previous few years he felt that this was not a realistic assumption albeit that it might be aspirational. He felt that this line should therefore be removed.

Councillor Dillon also commented that Line 9 (use of capital receipts) was also shown as zero across the three years, however the Capital Strategy and Programme report (agenda item 16) made reference to the use of capital receipts to fund the revenue cost of transforming Council services in 2018/19 and 2019/20. He felt that the paper was therefore factually inaccurate and was not representative of the true position of the Council going forward.

Councillor Graham Jones accepted that there were some large unknowns to be dealt with in the future. For example if the lobbying in respect of the Revenue Support Grant was successful this would have a significant impact on future iterations of the MTFS.

Councillor Chadley stated that there was a set formula in place for the collection of Council Tax and this was reflected in the MTFS. He also confirmed that the text in relation to Capital Receipts was correct and that he would ensure that Councillor Dillon was provided with an explanation outside of the meeting. *(Post meeting note an explanation was sent to Councillor Dillon on 8 March 2018).*

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

91. **Capital Strategy and Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23 (C3276)**

(All Members had been granted a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer to speak and vote on this item).

(Councillor James Fredrickson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 16 by virtue of the fact that he was employed by Gigaclear. As his interest was personal and prejudicial he left the meeting and took no part in the debate or voting on the matter).

(Councillor Fredrickson left the meeting at 7.09pm)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 16) which outlined the five year Capital Strategy for 2018 to 2023, including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement and the Asset Management Plans for Property and Highways. The report also set out the funding framework for the Council's five year Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2022/23.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Anthony Chadley and seconded by Councillor Jeanette Clifford:

That the Council:

“approves the Capital Strategy and Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23”.

Councillor Anthony Chadley commented that he was pleased to report that the Programme continued to confirm the Council's commitment to delivering its key priorities of education, infrastructure, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and the digital economy. It also set out the Council's commitment to invest in commercial property which would help to generate vital income to assist with the running costs of the Council. The Programme outlined capital investment of £160m over the following five years, only £70m of which would be Council capital resources.

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Councillor Chadley thanked Officers for the outstanding work they had undertaken to secure grants for capital projects.

Councillor Lynne Doherty noted that 92% of children had been informed earlier that day that they had been given their first choice of secondary school and 98% would be given one of their first three choices. This was a testimony to how successful the Programme had been over the last few years. The Council would continue to invest in new school places in the course of this Programme. She also wished to draw attention to the funding that had been set aside for the additional free nursery hours for under fives.

Councillor Doherty also welcomed the investment in continuing to improve the accessibility of schools and the support provided for the inclusion of pupils with Special Education Needs into mainstream education where appropriate.

Councillor Lee Dillon noted that it was proposed that £55m be set aside for highways improvements. He commented that the roads in the District were in a bad state of repair. He would therefore have liked to have seen some of the £500k of funding that had been set aside for the maintenance of the corporate offices to be spent on the planned maintenance of the road network.

He commented that while he welcomed the funding for the free nursery school places he did not think that the £46k set aside would be sufficient. He was concerned that £1.9m of funding for temporary accommodation had been removed in the Council version of the report. In his opinion the Programme did not go far enough in respect of the provision of affordable housing options.

Councillor Jeanette Clifford commented that this was a broad, ambitious, deliverable and affordable programme. She accepted that it was always possible to do more but the programme had to be affordable and this was a good programme. She disputed Councillor Dillon's comments that the roads were in a poor condition and this had been independently verified. The amendment to the Programme suggested by Councillor Dillon would amount to an increase of about half a percent on the roads budget (£55m) which would have little impact. It was important to properly maintain the Council Offices so that staff could continue to provide good services for its clients. This expenditure was not extravagant and the funding would be spent on replacing the windows and fixing the toilets.

She noted that the Council would only be funding around a half of the Programme which would be supported by prudential borrowing. The remainder of the Programme would be funded from a range of sources including developer contributions, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Environment Agency.

Councillor Chadley commented that he was disappointed to see Councillor Dillon's comments in the press and commented that he clearly did not think much of staff if he begrudged making the offices fit for purpose.

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

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.15.2 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Motion be recorded. The names of those Members voting for, against and abstaining were read to the Council as follows:

FOR the Motion:

Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, Howard Bairstow, Jeremy Bartlett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Paul Bryant, Anthony Chadley, Keith Chopping, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, Jason Collis, Richard Crumly, Rob Denton-Powell, Lynne Doherty, Adrian Edwards, Dave Goff, Carol Jackson-Doerge,

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Graham Jones, Rick Jones, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Graham Pask, Anthony Pick, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster.

AGAINST the Motion:

Councillor Lee Dillon.

ABSTAINED:

None

(Councillor Fredrickson returned to the meeting at 7.24pm)

92. Revenue Budget 2018/19 (C3277)

(All Members had been granted a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer to speak and vote on this item).

(Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, Jeff Beck, Dominic Boeck, Jason Collis, Richard Crumly, Lynne Doherty, Adrian Edwards, Dave Goff and Anthony Pick declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 17 by virtue of the fact that they were dual hatted Members and a number of proposals would affect them in that capacity. As their interest was personal and not an other registrable nor a disclosable pecuniary interest they determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Jeff Beck declared a personal interest in Agenda item 17 by virtue of the fact that he was a Council appointed Trustee of The Corn Exchange (Newbury) Trust Limited, Readibus and Volunteer Centre West Berkshire. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Jeanette Clifford declared a personal interest in Agenda item 17 by virtue of the fact that she was a Governor and Foundation Governor of St. Bartholomew's School, a Trustee of the Charity of Mrs. Mable Luke and a Governor of South Central Ambulance Service. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial she was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Jason Collis declared a personal interest in Agenda item 17 by virtue of the fact that he was a substitute on the City Deal Joint Committee. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Lynne Doherty declared a personal interest in Agenda item 17 by virtue of the fact that her husband was co-opted onto Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial she was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Rick Jones declared a personal interest in Agenda item 17 by virtue of the fact that he was a Council representative on WB Mencap and a member of West Berkshire Disability Alliance. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

(Councillor Tim Metcalfe declared a personal interest in Agenda item 17 by virtue of the fact that he was a Trustee of the Adventure Dolphin (Pangbourne) Charity. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).

The Chairman clarified the rules of debate for this item which had been agreed by both Group Leaders prior to the meeting. Firstly, Councillor Graham Jones would move the Motion as set out in the agenda which would be seconded by Councillor Anthony Chadley. During his presentation Councillor Graham Jones would speak to the report and would also introduce his two amendments. Councillor Jones would be permitted to speak

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for up to 10 minutes. Following Councillor Graham Jones' introduction the Council would consider each of the proposed amendments in turn once they had been seconded, the first by Councillor Dillon and the second by Councillor Chadley. Councillor Lee Dillon would then respond to the Motion. He would have up to 10 minutes to speak.

All Portfolio and Shadow Portfolio Holders would be permitted to speak for up to five minutes on the Motion and the amendment with all other Members being allowed 2.5 minutes.

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 17) concerning the 2018/19 Revenue Budget, which proposed a Council Tax requirement of £94.84m requiring a Council Tax increase of 2.99% in 2018/19 with a 3% precept ring-fenced for Adult Social Care. The Council Tax increase would raise £2.7m and the precept would raise a further £2.7m ring-fenced for Adult Social Care. The report also proposed the Fees and Charges for 2018/19 as set out in Appendix H and the Parish Special Expenses as set out in Appendix I, and recommended the level of General Reserves as set out in Appendices F and G.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Graham Jones and seconded by Councillor Anthony Chadley:

That the Council:

- “(1) approves the 2018/19 Council Tax requirement of £94.84 million, based on accepting Business Rates Pilot status across Berkshire, requiring a Council Tax increase of 2.99% with a 3% precept ring-fenced for adult social care.
- (2) approves the Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix H and the appropriate statutory notices be placed where required.
- (3) approves the Parish Special Expenses as set out in Appendix I.
- (4) acknowledge and note the responses received to each of the public facing savings proposals in the public consultation exercise undertaken on the 2018/19 budget.
- (5) recommend that if the Garden Waste Collection Service is approved then delegated authority be granted to the Head of Transport and Countryside in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Waste to enable the necessary contract changes to be made to facilitate the changes to the Garden Waste Collection Service.
- (6) note the following amounts for the year 2018/19 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (by the Localism Act 2011):-
 - (a) £64,890.66 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 M 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.
- (7) calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2018/19 (excluding Parish precepts) is £94,838,347.

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- (8) calculate the following amounts by the Council for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, amended by the Localism Act 2011:-
- (a) £312,550,626 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) £213,525,349 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) £99,025,277 being the amount by which the aggregate at 8(a) above, exceeds the aggregate at 8(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with the Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R).
 - (d) £1526.03 being the amount at 8(c) above (Item R), all divided by 6(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) £4,186,930 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as per Appendix M).
 - (f) £1461.51 being the amount at 8(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 8(e) above by the amount at 6(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.
- (9) note that for the year 2018/19, 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 M.
- (10) 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 M as the amounts of Council Tax for 2018/19 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings."

Councillor Graham Jones reported that ensuring that the Council delivered a fair and balanced budget that worked for every resident of the district was absolutely vital and he believed that this had been achieved.

Over the past five years the Council had faced increasing demands for its core services, coupled with reduced funding. In 2013/14 the grant from Central Government was almost £24m and that grant was now virtually zero. Growth in other income streams had helped to mitigate this, but taking inflation into account there had been a real term reduction in the Council's spending of £10.5m each year compared to 2013/14. West Berkshire had become one of the first areas in the country that was self-financing. As most of its business rates had been passed back to Central Government West Berkshire was a net contributor of £64m to the Government.

Budgets were particularly under strain as a result of the spiralling cost of adult social care, which represented almost 40% of the Council's budget. It was estimated that by 2036 there would be two adults of working age for every one retired. Caring for the most vulnerable was one of the most important things the Council did. It was the right thing to do and the Council did it well. Through the ground breaking accountable care pilot with the NHS, the Council could look to mitigate the effects of this and improve patient care

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but the fact remained that the Council would have a significant adult social care bill. However, in spite of these challenges, there was also a lot to celebrate.

The Council Strategy set out in 2015 by Councillor Lundie outlined the key priorities that were at the heart of all the Council did. The past year had seen a great deal of achievement in these priority areas.

With its Berkshire partners, the Council had successfully bid to become part of the next business rates retention pilot, which would allow it to raise and spend more of the business rates locally. The Council collected £86m in business rates every year, £64m of which were returned to Central Government. Being able to retain the majority of this in Berkshire would ensure that it could be spent on infrastructure and services that really made a difference to the District.

Councillor Graham Jones commented that all service budgets had been gone through in great detail. Officers, Members and the public had examined where savings could be made, how it could work differently and which services should be prioritised. This was done very clearly when the Council consulted on this year's budget. The public expressed their view as to how important the Citizens Advice Bureau's services were and this was reflected in one of the amendments.

Any future savings made would be more challenging than those that had gone before. Without funding, the Council would not be in a position to provide the services its residents needed. Therefore, like many other Councils, it was with regret that a Council Tax rise of 5.99% was proposed, comprising 2.99% on basic Council Tax and a 3% Adult Social Care precept. The Leader commented that this was an immensely difficult decision to take. To put this budget into context, although this increase would generate an additional £5.4 million for the Council's budget, a combination of inflation and the removal of Revenue Support Grant meant that the Council actually had less to spend on its essential services.

The outcome of the next few months and years could not be foreseen. What was clear was that West Berkshire remained a fantastic place to live, work and learn.

AMENDMENT 1: Proposed by Councillor Graham Jones and seconded by Councillor Lee Dillon:

That the Council:

"replace the proposed saving relating to on street charging shown on page 263 of the agenda papers (and below) with a general efficiency savings target for the Transport and Countryside Service of the same value".

Line 46	Income from further on street charging	This proposal builds on income from on-street charging by introducing pay to park mobile phone at Broadway and High Street, Thatcham	Income	£10,900
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Councillor Lee Dillon welcomed the cross party support for this amendment. He noted that the Town Council had been unanimous in its wish to not see the charges introduced as were the Chamber of Commerce.

The Substantive Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

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In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.15.2 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Amendment be recorded. The names of those Members voting for, against and abstaining were read to the Council as follows:

FOR the Motion:

Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, Howard Bairstow, Jeremy Bartlett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Paul Bryant, Anthony Chadley, Keith Chopping, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, Jason Collis, Richard Crumly, Rob Denton-Powell, Lee Dillon, Lynne Doherty, Adrian Edwards, James Fredrickson, Dave Goff, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Graham Jones, Rick Jones, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Graham Pask, Anthony Pick, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster.

AGAINST the Motion:

None

ABSTAINED:

None

AMENDMENT 2: Proposed by Councillor Graham Jones and seconded by Councillor Anthony Chadley:

That the Council:

“amend Appendix H3 Fees and Charges – Environment Directorate”.

Description	2017/18	2018/19 Proposed	Notes
Newbury Season Ticket Prices: Newbury “General”, Per Quarter	£350.00	£350.00	No change
Other Licences and Charges:			
Sewerage treatment property charge	£335.00	£368.50	Applicable to properties not connected to mains drainage but to WBC owned sewerage treatment plants.
Public Transport:			
Provision of information at bus stops for services not subsidised by WBC per stop	£10.00	£11.00	
Concession bus pass replacement fee	£15.00	£16.50	
Highway search enquiries:			
One A4 plan covering 100 metres of highway	£45.00	£49.50	
Additional 100 metres	£12.00	£13.20	
Additional question	£12.00	£13.20	
Provision of Data:			

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Description	2017/18	2018/19 Proposed	Notes
Provision of recorded injury accident Data	£125.00 + £40.00 per additional block of up to 10 accidents	£137.50 + £44 per additional block of up to 10 accidents	Cost per request for up to and including 10 recorded injury accidents. There will be a further charge of £44.00 for up to each additional block of 10 recorded injury accidents (e.g. 11-20 accidents would cost £181.50; 21-30 accidents would cost £225.50 etc).
Highways Development Control Fees:			
Production of current statutory undertakers schedule for commercial companies	£55.00	£60.50	
Goldwell Park and Newbury Football Club:			
Up to 4 hours	£1.00	£1.00	Football Club charges reduced to align with Goldwell Park from 2018/19
Over 4 hours	£2.00	£2.00	Football Club charges reduced to align with Goldwell Park from 2018/19
No Evening Charge			

Councillor Graham Jones stated that this was a correction to the documentation issued and he did not have any additional comments to make.

The Substantive Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.15.2 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Amendment be recorded. The names of those Members voting for, against and abstaining were read to the Council as follows:

FOR the Motion:

Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, Howard Bairstow, Jeremy Bartlett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Paul Bryant, Anthony Chadley, Keith Chopping, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, Jason Collis, Richard Crumly, Rob Denton-Powell, Lee Dillon, Lynne Doherty, Adrian Edwards, James Fredrickson, Dave Goff, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Graham Jones, Rick Jones, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Graham Pask, Anthony Pick, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster.

AGAINST the Motion:

None

ABSTAINED:

None

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The discussion then returned to the substantive motion. Councillor Lee Dillon commented that the Council was asking tax payers to pay an additional 6% council tax on top of a range of other charges they were introducing. This would create a divide in the district between those that could afford the payments and those that could not. He was of the opinion that the proposed budget only worked for the rich. He felt that it would be useful for the Council to use £450k of the remainder of the Transitional Fund (which still had £650k in it) to reduce the proposed green waste collection service from £50 per household to £25 per household for 2018/19 to assist residents with the transition. Councillor Dillon commented that the £900k savings attached to that scheme was unrealistic as many residents were indicating that they would not be willing to pay for the service.

As the Amendment proposed by Councillor Dillon was not seconded no debate occurred on it. Councillor Dillon stated that, for that reason, he would not seek approval of his other amendment which sought to use a further £20k from the Transitional Fund to cancel the proposal to introduce full charging for arranging residents care packages.

Discussion then turned to the Substantive Motion. Councillor James Fredrickson commented that the question some residents would ask themselves was 'am I paying more for less' and the reality was that some residents would be. The Council was being forced to make difficult decisions. This budget however sought to protect the most vulnerable residents in the District. The extra funding generated by the ASC precept would be used to provide extra support for them.

Councillor Emma Webster commented that the budget underpinned the Council's key aims of better educated communities, a stronger local economy, protecting and supporting those who needed it and maintaining a high quality of life within its communities. At times this was not visible to residents but it was important to provide individuals with the best life chances that the Council could provide. She acknowledged that waste was an emotive issue. She could not support Councillor Dillon's proposal and it would be up to individual residents as to whether they opted in or out. She reminded Members that if they had concerns about the state of the roads they should report any incidents to the Council. In her experience any defects were quickly repaired where it was appropriate to do so.

Councillor Lynne Doherty was pleased to see the support offered to children in the district. She stated however that it would be remiss of her not to mention the extreme pressure some of the budgets in this area were facing due to an increase in demand. This budget would only be able to support the most vulnerable and there was not sufficient budget to undertake preventative work. The Council, in partnership with the Local Government Association, would continue to lobby Central Government for additional financial support.

Councillor Rick Jones noted that there had been a lot of discussion around the Adult Social Care budgets which comprised 40% of the Council's expenditure. It was becoming increasingly difficult to deal with the pressures in this area. Officers were continuing to manage demand and seek out best value where they could. Officers were also exploring the use of technology to improve care and reduce costs and families were being used to support individuals where this was appropriate.

Councillor Anthony Stansfeld commented that the householders in a Band D property would be charged an additional £12 per annum (which equated to a 7% increase) as part of the precept raised by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley. The police were facing considerable cuts in their budget. In the Thames Valley this equated to around £100m per annum in real terms. One third of the funding for the police was derived from council tax and the remaining two thirds came from Central Government.

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Councillor Adrian Edwards commented that as a keen cyclist he encountered potholes and whenever he reported them they were repaired within 72 hours. He also drew attention to the co-operative work that was being undertaken between town/parish councils and the District Council.

Councillor Hilary Cole, on behalf of Councillor Marcus Franks, drew attention to the changes to the budget in respect of Citizens Advice West Berkshire. The Council had listened to the comments that came out of the consultation and the Council would only be reducing their funding by £40k and not the £80k that had originally been suggested.

Councillor Anthony Chadley wholeheartedly endorsed the budget proposal for 2018/19 presented by Councillor Jones. The Council continued to look at ways to generate income which would be key to the ongoing financing of the Council's services. Property investment was well under way and once fully invested was expected to contribute £1m to the Council's income. In addition, a further £1m had been generated from other income streams.

The Council's Transformation Fund was used wisely and was not to be used to offer sweeteners to residents. The Council would not make promises that appeared to offer a better result for residents but in the long term would leave them worse off. The Council would continue to investigate how it could generate new income, i.e. new money to pay for real costs. Every pound, every penny of the Transformation Fund would be used wisely with the aim of multiplying the pot, not throwing it away on short term, ill thought out 'vote winners'. This budget was a sound budget, it was a responsible budget and it was a forward thinking budget.

Councillor Graham Jones reiterated that while the Administration did not want to increase Council Tax the increase in demand and decrease in funding meant that they had to.

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

In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.15.2 it was requisitioned that the voting on the Amendment be recorded. The names of those Members voting for, against and abstaining were read to the Council as follows:

FOR the Motion:

Councillors Steve Ardagh-Walter, Howard Bairstow, Jeremy Bartlett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Paul Bryant, Anthony Chadley, Keith Chopping, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, Jason Collis, Richard Crumly, Rob Denton-Powell, Lynne Doherty, Adrian Edwards, James Fredrickson, Dave Goff, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Graham Jones, Rick Jones, Gordon Lundie, Tim Metcalfe, Graham Pask, Anthony Pick, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Anthony Stansfeld, Quentin Webb and Emma Webster.

AGAINST the Motion:

Councillor Lee Dillon.

ABSTAINED:

None.

93. Statutory Pay Policy 2018 (C3278)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 18) concerning approval of the Council's Pay Policy Statement for publication from 1st April 2018.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Graham Bridgman and seconded by Councillor Keith Chopping:

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That the Council:

“approve the Statutory Pay Policy Statement for publication as set out in Appendix C of the report in accordance with s38 of the Localism Act”.

Councillor Graham Bridgman noted that this was a statutory document that the Council was required to produce. He noted that the pay award was yet to be agreed and that the document would be updated in line with any changes required. If the pay award was higher than the figure budgeted for the report would be taken back to the Personnel Committee.

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

94. **West Berkshire 2015-2019 Council Strategy: Refresh 2018 (C3395)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 19) concerning the refreshed Council Strategy 2015-2019 for consideration and approval. The refreshed document articulated the progress that had been made and introduced new or updated projects to support the delivery of the Council's priorities for improvement.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Graham Bridgman and seconded by Councillor Hilary Cole:

That the Council:

“approve the refreshed Council Strategy covering the period 2015-2019”.

Councillor Graham Bridgman thanked the Members of the Task Group that had looked at the targets for their contribution. He also thanked the Officers that had worked on the targets and refreshed the strategy.

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that he would like the task group to reconvene to revisit the targets leading up the drafting of the new Strategy.

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

95. **Recommendations of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel 2017 (C3408)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 20) concerning the recommendations of the West Berkshire Council Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) following their meeting on 6th November 2017.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Graham Jones and seconded by Councillor Emma Webster:

That the Council:

“consider and agree the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel”.

AMENDMENT: Proposed by Councillor Graham Jones and seconded by Councillor Rick Jones:

That the Council:

“approve and adopt the recommendation in paragraph 9.17 subject to the inclusion of the following amendment:

The Panel recommends that the Opposition Spokespersons should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance set at 30% of the Leader of the Opposition's Special Responsibility Allowance which equates to £2,219 per annum and that this Special Responsibility Allowance should be paid to a maximum of four members of the opposition

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provided that the Opposition Spokespersons Special Responsibility Allowances are paid in proportion to those paid to the administration”.

Councillor Graham Jones commented that this was a process that the Council was obliged to undertake at least every four years. The Panel had suggested a number of minor amendments to the scheme which he supported. He was however of the opinion that the Opposition should only receive Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) which were in line with the proportion paid to the Administration.

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that while it was important that the SRAs reflected the importance of the work undertaken by the Opposition he agreed that they should be paid in proportion to those of the Administration.

The Substantive Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

Councillor Dillon commented that the report showed an increase in the allowance paid to the Deputy Leader and an additional allowance for the Chairman of the Personnel Committee. He explained that when he had given his evidence to the Panel he had stated that he felt that it was right that these roles be recognised. He had also commented on the need to be mindful of the public opinion on allowances generally.

Councillor Emma Webster commented that this was never an easy topic to discuss and that was why the role of the IRP was crucial. She highlighted the way the Basic Allowance was calculated which factored in the number of hours required to be an effective councillor, the number of those hours that should be remunerated and the rate that they should be remunerated at. She noted that in West Berkshire the Public Service Discount (the voluntary time contribution by members) was set at 50%.

Councillor Webster noted that, as the current Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission, she was supportive of the reduction in the SRA paid to that role given the new scrutiny model that had been adopted. She was also supportive of paying a SRA to the Chairman of the Personnel Committee given the level of responsibility this role carried. She noted that the Panel was mindful that ‘in order to attract candidates from more diverse backgrounds, as well as young employed professionals, the Basic Allowance should be set at a level to mitigate some of the factors that may dissuade some people from standing for election’.

Councillor Graham Jones noted that it was always up to Members to decide whether or not they wished to accept their allowance.

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

96. Property Investment Strategy (C3401)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 21) concerning the planned periodic review of the Property Investment Strategy to ensure its compatibility with market conditions and the Council’s investment objectives.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Dominic Boeck and seconded by Councillor Anthony Chadley:

That the Council:

- “(1) Adopt the revised Property Investment Strategy (West Berkshire Council – Property Investment Strategy (revised), January 2018);
- (2) delegate to the Head of Legal Services in consultation with and having received agreement from the Property Investment Board to purchase investment property in accordance with the above Strategy up to a maximum of £15m per transaction;

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- (3) delegate to the Head of Legal Services in consultation with and having received agreement from the Property Investment Board to dispose of property in accordance with the above Strategy up to a maximum of £15m per transaction.”

Councillor Dominic Boeck noted that the Council had approved the initial Property Investment Strategy in May 2017. The Council had agreed to invest up to £50m in commercial property in order to generate additional income for the Council. It was agreed that the Strategy would be reviewed annually and the Council's agents Montagu Evans had therefore suggested some amendments to the existing Strategy which were set out on pages 495 to 497 of the paperwork. Since the adoption, the Council had invested in a number of properties.

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that he was in favour of the strategy but lamented that the Council had taken a while to begin investing in commercial property.

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

97. Market Street Land Appropriation (C3373)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 22) concerning appropriation of the Council's land at Market Street in order to facilitate the development of the site by Grainger of its consented scheme.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Dominic Boeck and seconded by Councillor Graham Jones:

That the Council:

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- “(1) authorise the appropriation of the land at Market Street, Newbury (the Site) for planning purposes (as shown on the plan at Appendix B which is owned freehold by the Council edged red and edged green) under the provisions of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 to enable the Council to override third party rights and easements pursuant to Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016; and
- (2) That in doing so the Council has considered the provisions of the Equalities Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 contained in paragraph 6.9 of this report, so far as they might be applicable in deciding whether or not to authorise the appropriation, and with regard to Article 1 of Protocol 1 Part II of Schedule 1 of the Human Rights Act 1998, it is considered that in balancing the rights of the individuals who may be affected by the appropriation against the benefit to the community of proceeding with the appropriation, the appropriation resulting in the interference of individual rights is justified in the interests of regenerating the area.”

Councillor Dominic Boeck commented that this was an important scheme that would benefit residents as well as businesses. He noted that the Council owned most of the site but this proposal was being enacted to prevent various rights interfering with the scheme. This recommendation would not prevent third parties from receiving any payments owed to them.

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

98. **Challenging Communication Issues - Update to the Officers Code of Conduct (C3434)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 23) concerning proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct relating to Officers' use of social media.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Graham Bridgman and seconded by Councillor Keith Chopping:

That the Council:

“approve the amendments to the Officers Code of Conduct within Part 13 of the Constitution as detailed in Appendix C of the report”.

Councillor Bridgman explained that the amendments were designed to reflect the changing nature of social media and also to provide clarity around issues that had arisen. He thanked Officers for the work they had put into amending the policy. Councillor Chopping commented that this appeared to be a sensible approach and he therefore encouraged Members to support it.

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

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.36 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature