

# DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

## EXECUTIVE

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 14 JUNE 2018

**Councillors Present:** Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Hilary Cole, Lynne Doherty, James Fredrickson and Graham Jones

**Also Present:** John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Thomas Bailey (Senior Contracts and Commissioning Officer), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Melanie Ellis (Chief Accountant), Gabrielle Esplin (Finance Manager (Capital and Treasury Management)), June Graves (Head of Care Commissioning, Housing & Safeguarding), Ian Pearson (Head of Education Service), Peta Stoddart-Crompton (Public Relations Officer), Councillor Jeff Brooks, Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor Lee Dillon, Councillor Adrian Edwards, Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge, Councillor Mollie Lock, Councillor Alan Macro and Gabrielle Mancini (Group Executive - Conservatives)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Anthony Chadley, Councillor Jeanette Clifford, Councillor Marcus Franks and Councillor Rick Jones

#### PART I

#### 3. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 3 May and 17 May 2018 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Leader.

#### 4. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Lee Dillon declared an interest in Agenda Item 8, and reported that, as his interest was a disclosable pecuniary interest or an other registrable interest, he would be leaving the meeting during the course of consideration of the matter.

#### 5. Public 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 submitted by Mr Thomas Tunney to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste

A question standing in the name of Mr Thomas Tunney on the subject of the Council's expenditure during the winter of 2016/17 in helping the homeless with emergency accommodation in Newbury would receive a written answer from the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

##### (b) Question submitted by Mr Thomas Tunney to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste

A question standing in the name of Mr Thomas Tunney on the subject of the amount of money the Soup Kitchen and West Berkshire Homeless had saved West Berkshire Council during the winter of 2017/18 would receive a written answer from the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

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**(c) Question submitted by Mr Thomas Tunney to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste**

A question standing in the name of Mr Thomas Tunney on the subject of the projected costs for the extra fly tipping and landfill charges that would be produced as a by-product of the new garden waste charge would receive a written answer from the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

**(d) Question submitted by Ms Julie Wintrup to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure**

A question standing in the name of Ms Julie Wintrup on the subject of whether West Berkshire Council, as sponsor of Healthwatch West Berkshire's research into homelessness, ensured that NHS Research Ethics Committee approval was gained to conduct the research would receive a written answer from the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure.

**(e) Question submitted by Ms Julie Wintrup to the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture**

A question standing in the name of Ms Julie Wintrup on the subject of whether West Berkshire Council, as sponsor of Healthwatch West Berkshire's research into homelessness, considered itself to have protected adequately the data of the vulnerable adults who participated in the research would receive a written answer from the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Culture and Leisure.

**(f) Question submitted by Mr David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste**

A question standing in the name of Mr David Marsh (asked on his behalf by Ms Carolyn Culver) on the subject of whether West Berkshire residents would be charged a reduced amount for their garden waste bin if they received council tax support, in line with the practice for residents in Reading, was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

**(g) Question submitted by Mr David Marsh to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste**

A question standing in the name of Mr David Marsh (asked on his behalf by Ms Carolyn Culver) on the subject of whether West Berkshire residents would be offered a 25% reduction for their garden waste bin if they received single person discount on their council tax was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

**(h) Question submitted by Ms Carolyn Culver to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste**

A question standing in the name of Ms Carolyn Culver on the subject of what financial and operational contingencies would be put in place in the likelihood that black bins would be stuffed with garden waste and fly tipping would increase, as a result of the £50 charge for garden waste bins, was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

**(i) Question submitted by Mr Gabriel Stirling to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste**

A question standing in the name of Mr Gabriel Stirling on the subject of whether it would have been appropriate for representatives from Veolia and the Council's Waste Management Team to have attended the recent planning meeting that determined the applications regarding the Padworth recycling centre, so that they could have addressed

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concerns raised by local residents and Members of the Committee, was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

### 6. Petitions

Professor Keith Bright presented a petition containing 416 signatures which called upon the Council to implement traffic calming and other safety measures along Benham Hill from Henwick Lane to the Tull Way/Turnpike Road roundabout. The petition would be referred to the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, Environment and Countryside, and to the Head of Transport and Countryside for a response.

### 7. Revenue Financial Performance 2017/18 - Provisional Outturn (EX3306)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) which informed Members of the provisional revenue outturn for 2017/18, sought approval of the provisional outturn report and sought approval to refer the paper to the Budget Scrutiny Task Group for further review.

Councillor Graham Jones, in presenting the report, advised that the provisional outturn was an overspend of £276k against a net revenue budget of £117.4m (which was 0.23% of the net budget and therefore close to being on budget).

He reported underspends in both the Resources Directorate and the Economy and Environment Directorate. These helped to offset the overspend in the Communities Directorate.

The report also detailed the reasons for making use of the risk reserves for Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children and Families. A significant proportion of the ASC Risk Reserve was used to help meet inflationary pressures in that service.

Councillor Jones reiterated that the Council had been close to balancing its budget and was managing well when considering the pressures being faced by the authority. Difficult decisions had needed to be made by the Council to reach this year-end position, however very difficult alternative measures would have become necessary if this had not been the case. This was particularly true when considering the reductions to the Council's budgets over recent years. The Council's annual budget had reduced by £7.5m since 2015/16 and Central Government support (Revenue Support Grant (RSG)) had decreased from £25m to zero. As a result the Administration had been forced to increase Council Tax.

A high proportion of the Council's expenditure was on care, Adult Social Care and for Children and Family Services. Councillor Jones advised that around 60% of the Council's resources were spent on 3% of the population. He acknowledged that this was a startling statistic.

Volatility would continue moving forward. A particular concern was the potential for negative RSG and the Government was being lobbied on this point. While West Berkshire, together with all local authorities across Berkshire, was able to retain its business rates income as part of a pilot project, this held no certainty into the future.

Councillor Graham Bridgman continued to emphasise the financial challenges that the Council had faced over recent years. At his request and to aid comparisons, Accountancy had investigated the funding level that would have been required in 2017/18 to maintain service provision as per the 2013/14 funding level (if this had continued). This took into account issues such as inflationary rises and there was a stark difference. Councillor Bridgman informed the Executive that funding would need to have been £153m in 2017/18 when in reality the budget was £117m. Therefore a real term reduction

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in expenditure of £35m. This illustrated the difficulties faced by the Council in setting its budgets.

Councillor Jones also drew Members' attention to the 2017/18 Savings and Income Generation Programme and highlighted the high success rate of achieving savings and income targets.

Councillor Lee Dillon gave his support to lobbying government to prevent negative RSG. He hoped it would prove successful.

Councillor Dillon referred to Councillor Bridgman's point on the £35m reduction in funding. He noted that this reduction came from a Conservative Government and Councillor Dillon felt that West Berkshire's Conservative Administration should have done more to hold MPs and the Government to greater account on this.

Councillor Dillon then noted that the outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was an overspend of £14k. This was an improvement from the planned overspend of £844k when the budget was set. However, Councillor Dillon questioned the cost to children's education from this improved position. Councillor Lynne Doherty responded on this point by firstly stating that 95% of West Berkshire's schools were rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. Much of this success was testament to sound financial management with schools able to balance their budgets. In cases where schools encountered difficulties with managing their finances, the Council was able to offer support.

However, Councillor Doherty acknowledged that there was a serious issue to manage in terms of the High Needs Block which had overspent. Funding concerns in this area were consistently highlighted, and MPs and in turn Government Ministers were lobbied. It was important to ensure that the funding for pupils in this Block was sufficient.

Councillor Dillon then made the point that the decision had consistently been made to draw down funding from the ASC Risk Fund. He felt that this sum should either have been highlighted as part of the budget or an overspend figure reported before the Risk Fund was taken into account.

Councillor Alan Macro made the point that the provisional £276k overspend had been achieved post deployment of risk funds. Without this, the overspend would have been closer to £1.75m. Councillor Jones responded to this point by stating that he had made clear in presenting the report that risk funds had been utilised.

Councillor Jeff Brooks felt that the continuing financial pressures facing ASC had not been properly recognised by successive national governments. This needed recognising by central government and was a point on which to lobby. Adequate provision was needed for the ageing population.

Councillor Jones confirmed that lobbying was taking place on the funding difficulties faced, primarily funding care. He also added the point that a coalition government was in place until recently and there needed to be responsibility for the decisions made at that time by the coalition government and their impact.

Councillor Jones then explained that trigger points had been set for when funds could be released from the ASC Risk Fund. This flexibility in the budget had been created to allow funds to be deployed when necessary. He agreed that mature conversation was needed as a nation for funding care in the long term.

Councillor Bridgman gave his agreement to the points made in relation to the ageing population and the need for a national conversation moving forward. He then made the point that the risk reserves had been established for a purpose and were created using funding set aside from the budget. A primary reason for establishing the ASC risk reserve

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was the fact that there was not clarity at the start of financial years on issues including contractual inflation and the living wage. This could be predicted to a point, but there could not be certainty. This was a reserve which could be bid for and its use was closely critiqued to ensure it was spent appropriately.

Councillor James Fredrickson agreed with the need for the national conversation on the costs of care, as did Richard Benyon MP. He highlighted concerns relating to demographic changes, currently four people in work would pay for one person in care, this was expected to move over time to two people in work paying for one person in care.

Councillor Brooks then made the point that for many years the Resources Directorate had been able to come to the rescue in the final quarter of the financial year in order to achieve an improved financial position. Paragraph 5.4 of the summary report stated that the Resources Directorate outturn was a £575k underspend which was an increase of £357k from that reported at Quarter Three. He felt this constituted over budgeting and was a continuing issue.

In response to this point, Councillor Jones explained that many elements of the Communities Directorate were demand led, whereas the Resources Directorate and the Economy and Environment Directorate were less so and therefore more straight forward to manage.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The financial performance of the Council be noted.
- The provisional outturn report be approved.
- The paper would be referred to the Budget Scrutiny Task Group for further review.

**Other options considered:** n/a – factual report for information.

## **8. Capital Financial Performance 2017/18 - Provisional Outturn (EX3306a)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) which informed Members of the provisional capital outturn for 2017/18 and the likely impact of this on the 2018/19 Capital Programme. This was subject to the final result of the closedown and External Audit.

Councillor Graham Jones explained that total capital expenditure in 2017/18 was £38m from a revised budget of £49.8m. The budget was revised during the year to take account of funds brought forward from 2016/17, additional grant and Section 106 funding allocated during the year and spend re-profiled into 2018/19.

The budget remaining unspent at the end of the financial year mainly consisted of:

- £4.4m of the budget for commercial property acquisition for the purchase of further property now expected to be completed in July 2018;
- £4.5m of the Highways and Countryside Programme, including three resurfacing schemes which were delayed due to bad weather and the Kings Road Link on which the developer was behind schedule, together with delays to the A4 cycle route, Sandleford access improvements and a number of smaller schemes;
- An underspend of £751k on disabled facilities and home repair grants;
- Underspends on a number of education schemes (£413k) and Adult Social Care schemes (£309k).

Councillor Jones explained that £11.1m had been carried forward into the 2018/19 financial year within the services to which it had been allocated.

Councillor Lee Dillon referred to the underspend of £751k on disabled facilities and home repair grants. He queried whether government grant funding would need to be returned.

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Councillor Dillon also questioned the reasons for the underspend and asked if it was due to a lack of need or an inability to conduct assessments.

Councillor Graham Bridgman explained that expenditure of the Disabled Facilities Grant was demand led and grants had to be awarded to any disabled person who was eligible for the Council to fund adaptations in their home. However, there had been a backlog in processing grant applications over the last couple of years which had resulted in the budget being underspent. This was mainly because of a lack of occupational therapy resource to carry out assessments. In 2017/18, the surplus government grant had been used to fund occupational therapy equipment, which was administered by Adult Social Care (in line with the Better Care Fund agreement). The Housing Team had now recruited three new occupational therapists and a technical officer, who would be funded from the grant and would help to speed up the processing of grant applications. It was therefore the expectation that spend on Disabled Facilities Grants and administration would be in line with the budget of £1.5m in 2018/19.

Councillor Bridgman concluded by stating that it was the intention to utilise this funding wherever appropriate. Councillor Dillon was pleased to note this intention. Equipment such as a grab rail could do much to improve a person's quality of life.

Councillor Dominic Boeck explained that the Property Investment Board had done its best to reduce the underspend for the acquisition of commercial property. He confirmed that the first tranche of funding was close to being fully invested ahead of timelines, putting the Council on target to generate £1m per annum in income from 2019/20.

**RESOLVED** that the financial performance of the Council be noted.

**Other options considered:** n/a – factual report for information.

### 9. Joint Venture with Sovereign Housing Association (EX3392)

*(Councillor Lee Dillon declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 8 by virtue of the fact that he was an employee of Sovereign Housing Association. As his interest was a disclosable pecuniary interest he left the meeting at 5.36pm and took no part in the debate on the matter).*

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 8) which sought approval to establish a Joint Venture (JV) with Sovereign Housing Association as a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) to deliver the Council's housing objectives through the provision of additional homes, in a range of tenures, to meet housing need in the District.

Councillor Hilary Cole presented the item which was a good news story. The Council would be working with Sovereign, an established and trusted partner, to help deliver affordable housing in West Berkshire. This proposed approach would give the Council a much greater level of control over the delivery of its housing objectives. Councillor Cole highlighted the significant level of preparatory work that had been undertaken for the JV.

Councillor Cole explained that the proposal was for the Council and Sovereign to incorporate a new LLP on a 50:50 basis. The LLP would acquire, fund, develop, sell and own (as applicable) a mixture of tenures with the primary aim of achieving the Council's housing objectives. Developments would be brought forward on the basis of individual site appraisals to deliver a range of tenures would include affordable rent, shared ownership, market rent, starter homes and rent to buy.

Subject to Executive approval of the proposal, the first two potential sites for redevelopment had been identified: a decanted supported scheme in Hungerford for circa eight homes and a site in Newbury for circa 48 homes. A separate report covering the

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disposal of these two sites to the JV would be placed before the Executive once the financial appraisal and business plan had been developed.

Councillor Cole placed on record her thanks to officers of the Council and Sovereign for all their work in developing the JV. Councillor Graham Jones, in seconding the proposal, added his thanks for the efforts of all involved.

Councillor Graham Bridgman endorsed the points that had been made and added his particular thanks to officers for the enormous amount of work they had put into developing the JV.

Councillor Alan Macro felt this to be a good initiative. He did however have some points of concern. He questioned the start date for the JV when considering the Council's target of building 1,000 affordable homes by 2020. Work was needed to try and achieve this. Councillor Macro then noted that the JV could generate a financial surplus. He sought assurance that this would be ring-fenced and reinvested into affordable housing.

Councillor Jeff Brooks commented that this was a legal framework as opposed to a business plan. He queried when the business plan with details of costs etc would be provided, how this would be monitored and the frequency for doing so. An investment profile was needed.

Councillor Cole explained that the target for 1,000 affordable homes was always recognised as a stretch target. She pointed out that permission was in place for 200 affordable homes but these had not been built out by developers and this was outside of the Council's control.

Councillor Cole then advised that this was indeed the first part of the process which rightly concentrated on legal issues. Business Plans would be provided for each project in the JV and the process would be open and transparent throughout.

In response to the question regarding a target date, June Graves (Head of Commissioning) explained that legal work would continue into the autumn of this year, with the full launch of the JV planned for early in 2019.

She then explained that the default position would be reinvestment into the JV of any surplus funds, but there would be a level of flexibility in using funds for alternative, but appropriate, initiatives.

Councillor Macro voiced his hope that any surplus funds would be spent on affordable housing and not used to support the Council's budgets.

Councillor Cole closed the item by stating that this was a long term project which aimed to achieve sufficient numbers of affordable homes in West Berkshire. However, future circumstances could change and this was why a degree of flexibility remained for the use of any surplus funding.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- The establishment of the Joint Venture (JV) with Sovereign be approved in accordance with this report.
- Authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste, the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services, to:
  - establish a JV with Sovereign Housing structured through a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) to support the provision of additional homes in the District;
  - agree and authorise the execution of documentation required to implement the LLP model;
  - name the LLP; and

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- make appointments to the Management Board of the JV LLP of the Corporate Director of Economy and Environment, Head of Commissioning and Legal Services Manager (Governance & Environment).
- Agreement be given to allocate land adjacent to the Phoenix Centre, Newbury and land at Chestnut Walk, Hungerford ("the Projects") to be developed for housing by the JV, subject to a separate decision by this Executive on the disposal to JV together with valuation of the land and approval of the financial options appraisals for the Projects. Future projects in the JV Business Plan will also require approval by the Executive including any financial appraisals, business plans and the disposal of sites.

### **Other options considered:**

- To continue working with affordable housing providers on a piecemeal basis.
- Establish a wholly owned vehicle, e.g. a Housing Company.
- A procured JV.
- To do nothing.

## **10. Key Accountable Performance 2017/18: Quarter Four (EX3249)**

*(Councillor Lee Dillon returned to the meeting at 5.45pm).*

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 9) which outlined quarter four outturns for the Key Accountable Measures which monitored performance against the 2017/18 Council Performance Framework; which sought to provide assurance that the objectives set out in the Council Strategy and other areas of significant activity were being managed effectively; which presented, by exception, those measures that were RAG rated 'red' (targets not achieved) and which provided information on any remedial action being taken and its impact; and which recommended changes to measures/targets as requested by services.

Councillor Graham Jones in introducing the report stated that the Council set itself stretching and ambitious targets. The targets would have been set at too low a level if they had all been achieved. He highlighted the point made in the report that following an analysis of the absolute results achieved in 2017/18 compared to 2016/17, 65% of the key accountable measures had improved.

Councillor Jones went on to report that in terms of priorities for improvement, good performance had been maintained for areas such as protecting children and vulnerable adults, and in most of the key infrastructure projects.

Good performance also continued in quarter four in relation to children's social care, waste recycling and timeliness in determining planning applications.

Councillor Jones commended the report to the Executive and asked his colleagues to comment on the exception reports.

Councillor Lynne Doherty echoed the points made about positive performance levels in children's social care. She also reiterated the point made earlier in the meeting that 95% of West Berkshire's schools were rated either Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. This was a massive achievement and one that schools should be commended for.

Educational attainment in West Berkshire was improving in most areas, but the ambitious target of being in the top quartile nationally had not been achieved for Key Stages 2 and 4 as similar improvements to those achieved in West Berkshire had been achieved in other local authorities. Efforts would continue.

The Council remained 'red' in terms of closing the attainment gap. Councillor Doherty reassured Members that the educational attainment of disadvantaged pupils remained a priority and she acknowledged that performance was not where it needed to be. She did



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however make the point that this Council Strategy priority concerned a very low cohort of pupils and therefore percentages could be significantly altered by any changes to the attainment of this small number of pupils. There was unfortunately no magic answer to this national issue, but work would continue in taking this forward.

Councillor Doherty highlighted ambition as being key, in particular for disadvantaged pupils. She gave an assurance that the Council would aim to achieve in line with or above peer local authorities for this cohort of pupils. This included the need to work closely with children and their families to encourage them to share this level of ambition and aim to achieve in line with their peers.

Councillor Graham Bridgman referred to the red indicators in Adult Social Care (ASC). The efforts being made to improve performance were outlined in the exception reports and he encouraged Members to consider this detail to better understand the difficulties being faced. He explained that the implementation of the Care Director recording system brought with it the expectation that the target would be achieved for responding to ASC safeguarding concerns within 24 hours other than in exceptional circumstances.

Turning to the exception report for '% of clients with Long Term Service receiving a review in the past 12 months', Councillor Bridgman explained that turbulence within the team had led to a delay with undertaking some reviews within this timescale. However, this situation was settling. A difficulty remained with the timeliness of undertaking reviews for clients with complex needs and this would continue to be a point of focus for himself and the Head of Service.

Councillor Bridgman was encouraged by the improvements made to decrease the number of bed days due to Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC) from hospital. While this was 'red' at year end, this had improved from the numbers reported for 2016/17. An improvement from 808 to 573 had been achieved since that time. While this was moving in the right direction, efforts would continue to be made. It was felt that performance levels would be assisted by the increased level of resource available at Prospect Park Hospital.

Councillor Bridgman explained that the statistics relating to the red indicator to increase the number of older people who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services would be investigated. In particular, to assess how data could be affected by those residents who had sadly passed away. However, the aim would remain of helping people to continue to live in their own home.

Councillor Hilary Cole reiterated the point already highlighted in relation to the target to enable the completion of 1,000 affordable homes by 2020, i.e. that had permitted developments been built out by developers then the annual target for this measure would have been achieved. She explained that remedial actions were being taken forward. This included liaising with Homes England to ascertain if they would intervene in helping to progress the build out of approved sites to help move the housing market. Funding had also been received from the Ministry of Housing to help progress the Sterling Cables site and resolve contamination issues.

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that the point was often made about having ambitious targets. However, only two thirds of the targets had been achieved. This did not align with the 80/20 (green/red) split that had been referred to in previous years. He accepted that targets were ambitious but in a third of cases they had not been achieved and the targets were there to improve services for residents.

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Councillor Dillon then raised a number of queries arising from the exception reports:

- 'At KS4, the average attainment 8 score is in the top 25% of English Local Authorities'.

Councillor Dillon felt that the exception report provided a commentary on the statistics, but needed to provide the reasons for the 'red' performance. He therefore queried that.

Councillor Doherty explained that the ability to compare and contrast performance with that of recent years was made difficult by a change that had been made to the GCSE grading for Maths and English. However, she gave an assurance that while West Berkshire was not in the top 25% nationally, the picture was an improving one.

- '% of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) achieving Good Level of Development at Foundation Stage'.

Councillor Dillon noted the data on school engagement in network meetings which helped to improve outcomes. He queried what more could be done to compel schools to attend these meetings where they were not already doing so.

Councillor Doherty explained that she had explored this very point in discussion with a school and an important factor in encouraging attendance at network meetings was the need to consider the most appropriate timings for the meetings. These ideally needed to take place outside of school hours to enable a greater level of attendance from teachers and she would take this forward with the Head of Education. The location for the meetings was already being varied. Councillor Doherty felt that as much as possible should be done to encourage schools to attend network meetings rather than being compelled to do so.

Councillor Dillon referred to the point highlighted in this exception report as a real concern, i.e. the increase in the gap between the development of FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils. The number of good schools in West Berkshire was noted, but the report was clear that more needed to be done to help less advantaged pupils to make progress.

Councillor Doherty acknowledged that performance levels were not good enough and the gap was not acceptable. As already explained, work would continue with teachers, pupils and their families. Different initiatives would be progressed, as successful initiatives in one year did not necessarily find success in another year.

The report highlighted that there was no indication that the data received on this indicator for the Winchcombe School would be so low. Councillor Dillon queried how this was the case when considering that monitoring took place with the school throughout the year. Councillor Doherty advised that School Improvement Advisors would be progressing this matter with the school, this would include how this performance had been assessed through the year.

- 'To improve on 2015/16 academic year rankings for reading, writing and maths combined expected standard for disadvantaged pupils in KS2 in 2016/17 academic year'.

A concern was noted in the exception report that the expenditure of Pupil Premium funding was not being sufficiently evaluated by school leaders. Councillor Dillon explained that the introduction of Pupil Premium was a Liberal Democrat policy and needed to be used effectively and innovatively to help achieve the best outcomes for pupils. Councillor Doherty advised that use of the Pupil Premium Grant was being evaluated by the Pupil Premium Network. There were variances in the way that the grant was used in different schools and a standard form had been provided to improve this

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practice and make it more consistent. Schools needed to be thorough in determining the best use of the grant.

- ‘% of Adult Social Care safeguarding concerns responded to within 24 hours’.

Councillor Dillon highlighted a factual inaccuracy in this exception report where the number of concerns for the year was given as both 489 and 483. The former figure would put the year end percentage at 87.7% rather than 88%. Councillor Bridgman agreed to investigate this point before providing feedback.

- ‘Number of weeks taken to conclude care proceedings (Children Social Care)’.

The exception report made reference to discussions in relation to reducing delays caused by court capacity, but this text was unaltered from the quarter three report. These discussions needed to take place and Councillor Dillon queried why this had been delayed.

- ‘% of clients with Long Term Service receiving a review in the past 12 months’.

Councillor Dillon highlighted the point made in the exception report that performance had improved when additional resource had been put in place. However, this resource had been removed in year to help offset pressures in the service which resulted in less timely reviews for residents since then. Councillor Bridgman noted this comment, this was directly related to the point he made earlier on issues with resource. However, he repeated that this issue was settling down with the expectation that performance would again improve.

- ‘% of older people (65+) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services’.

Councillor Dillon shared the view expressed by Councillor Bridgman that the data for this indicator should be investigated to ensure the most accurate representation. He noted that performance for this target could be impacted by DToC performance.

Councillor Mollie Lock also referred to DToC. She raised the importance of ensuring that the necessary services were in place upon discharge from hospital. Councillor Lock stated that she would be disappointed if it was the case that a vulnerable person was discharged too soon without services first being confirmed. This was an area on which to concentrate efforts.

Councillor Bridgman acknowledged the need to ensure that improvements to DToC performance did not negatively impact on the target to keep people at home 91 days after discharge from hospital. It was important to manage both indicators carefully to ensure the right outcomes for residents.

Councillor Jeff Brooks noted that the number of empty business properties was 66% higher than in Q4 of 2016/17. He queried the actions being put in place to manage this and ensure there was an appropriate mix of premises for business purposes. Would this feature in the new Economic Development Plan?

In response, Councillor James Fredrickson referred Members to the Measures of Volume (Appendix D) which reported both the number of empty business premises which had increased and the number of properties which were subject to business rates which had also increased. It was useful to consider these two trend graphs collectively as the data in one graph went some way to balancing the data in the other. It was also important to reflect in the data those cases where businesses had vacated their premises temporarily in order to invest in the property/site.

Councillor Fredrickson added that the Economic Development Strategy would be refreshed and presented in due course.

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Councillor Alan Macro asked if there was an understanding as to why the number of planning applications received during Q3 (confirmed) and Q4 (provisional) was the lowest they had been for the last three financial years.

Councillor Hilary Cole explained that this indicator covered both minor and major planning applications. The lower number of planning applications received could be for major developments. Councillor Dillon suggested that the graph could be split into minor and major applications to help to understand performance more clearly. Councillor Cole agreed to explore this point.

Councillor Macro noted that the submission of the new Local Plan for examination was behind schedule against the target of December 2019. He was concerned at the impact this could have on home building targets. Councillor Macro considered the involvement of Planning Policy Officers in appeal hearings to be a contributing issue and felt this was therefore an area in need of additional resource. Councillor Cole clarified that attendance at appeal hearings was mostly in the remit of Development Control rather than Planning Policy Officers.

Councillor Macro referred to the exception report for the indicator 'to enable the completion of 1,000 affordable homes in the 2015-2020 period'. This had missed the 2017/18 target but it was rated 'amber'. He questioned how the target would be achieved by 2020 when performance was less than half way from the target after a three year period. Councillor Macro felt this should be rated 'red'. Councillor Cole did not accept that the indicator should be rated 'red' rather than 'amber'.

Councillor Lock highlighted the need to consider a range of factors to help understand why some children were not achieving within schools. This needed to include children with mental health problems and the importance of accessing suitable and stable housing. Housing and the home environment often linked with mental illness. The suitability and stability of housing was very important in helping a child's wellbeing and in helping them to achieve. It was also an important factor for the wellbeing of adults.

Councillor Doherty noted these points in relation to mental health which had many factors and complexities to consider. However, the Council had successfully implemented the Emotional Health Academy. This enabled earlier intervention and prevented issues escalating in many cases.

Councillor Jones closed the debate by commenting on the proportion of indicators reported 'green' as opposed to 'red'. He highlighted that the majority of targets continued to move in an upward trajectory. The targets were deliberately ambitious and designed as stretch targets. Councillor Jones referred to the affordable housing target as an example of where the Council was being ambitious in seeking to make improvements for residents.

### **RESOLVED that**

- Progress against the Key Accountable Measures (KAMs) and the key achievements in all services be noted. In comparison to last year, it was noted that the same proportion of measures are RAG rated Green (against similar or more challenging targets than in 2016/17). In absolute terms, it was noted that the results for the majority of the KAMs have further improved this year.
- Those areas reported as 'red' had been reviewed to ensure that appropriate action was in place. Consideration was particularly given to the results and improvement actions for:
  - Educational attainment of the Free School Meals and for disadvantaged pupils' cohorts.
  - Older people and vulnerable adults' wellbeing.

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- Progress towards adopting the Local Plan and Minerals & Waste Local Plan.
- A change in target from 'December 2019' to 'April 2020' be agreed for both 'the submission of a New Local Plan for examination' and 'the submission of a Minerals and Waste Local Plan for examination'.

**Other options considered:** None.

### 11. **Wash Common Library - Devolution and Community Asset Transfer (EX3558)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 10) which sought approval for the transfer of the Wash Common Library building to Newbury Town Council (NTC) on a five year short term lease for use by the Friends of Wash Common Library for use as a small part time library and community hub.

Councillor Dominic Boeck presented the report and reminded Members of the Council's decision to withdraw support to the Wash Common Library in 2016. It was however well used and popular amongst residents and Councillor Boeck was pleased to report that the Friends of Wash Common Library and Ward Members had worked together to develop a Business Plan to retain the library, this included consideration of funding. In addition, Newbury Town Council had added its support to the Business Plan.

Councillor Boeck proposed acceptance of the recommendation to transfer leaseholder responsibility to Newbury Town Council on a five year short term lease, with West Berkshire Council retaining the freehold.

Approval of this recommendation would enable the Friends of Wash Common Library to restart the library and this was an excellent opportunity for residents. This would also align with the devolution programme for a greater level of service devolution to parishes.

Councillor Alan Macro was concerned that the proposal for a five year lease could hamper the Town Council's ability to obtain grants in order to make improvements to the building. He queried whether this had been taken into account. Councillor Boeck confirmed that many potential funding mechanisms were referenced within the Business Plan.

Councillor Boeck added that the library would be operated by the Friends of Wash Common Library as a Community Interest Company, they would therefore be able to access funds by virtue of this charitable status.

Councillor Boeck concluded by wishing the Town Council and the Friends of Wash Common Library every success with operating the library.

**RESOLVED** to proceed with the transferral of leaseholder responsibility to Newbury Town Council and to permit this empty building to be reused as a library and community hub.

### 12. **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 Planning, Housing and Waste submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of whether the Council would support the target to end homelessness in West Berkshire by 2020 was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

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(b) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Communications submitted by Councillor Jeff Brooks**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks on the subject of the Council's plans to reach out to businesses nationwide to capitalise on the top tech award was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Communications.

(c) **Question to be answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste submitted by Councillor Alan Macro**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Alan Macro seeking clarification of the arrangements for the roll out of the new green bin charge was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Waste.

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

**RESOLVED** that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraphs 1, 2 and 5 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.

### 14. **West Berkshire CYPIT (Children and Young Peoples Integrated Therapy Services) (EX3555)**

*(Paragraph 5 – information relating to legal privilege)*

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 13) which sought approval for an exception to the current procurement rules in order to secure a three year contract, delivering a cumulative saving for West Berkshire Council. Savings would be realised by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budget.

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

**Reason for the decision:** as outlined in the exempt report.

**Other options considered:** as outlined in the exempt report.

### 15. **Organisational Change Proposal (EX3595)**

*(Paragraph 1 – information relating to an individual)*

*(Paragraph 2 – information identifying an individual)*

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 14) concerning the organisational change proposal for the Culture Team in Public Protection and Culture.

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

**Reason for the decision:** as outlined in the exempt report.

**Other options considered:** as outlined in the exempt report.

*(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 6.35pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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