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

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2020

Councillors Present: Steve Ardagh-Walter, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Hilary Cole, Lynne Doherty, Ross Mackinnon, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: John Ashworth (Executive Director - Place), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director - Resources), Andy Sharp (Executive Director (People)), Shiraz Sheikh (Legal Services Manager), Councillor Adrian Abbs, Councillor Peter Argyle, Councillor Phil Barnett, Councillor Jeff Beck, Councillor Jeff Brooks, Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor Carolyn Culver, Councillor Lee Dillon, Councillor Owen Jeffery, Councillor Rick Jones, Councillor Alan Law, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor David Marsh, Councillor Steve Masters, Councillor Erik Pattenden, Linda Pye (Principal Policy Officer), Councillor Garth Simpson and Councillor Tony Vickers

PART I

27. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2020 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon agreed to provide a response to the query raised by Councillor Jeff Brooks at the last meeting in relation to the Treasury Management Annual Report.

28. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

29. 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) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall querying the estimated cost of CPOs on the LRIE would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (b) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall on the subject of how many jobs would be affected by the closure of businesses if the LRIE project goes ahead would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (c) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall on the subject of whether the Council had plans to extend the scope of the LRIE project to adjoining properties by means of CPO would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (d) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall asking if there was a non-fulfillment clause with St Modwen would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

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- (e) The question submitted by Mr John Gotelee on the subject of why infrastructure and utilities was left out of the Avison Young brief would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (f) The question submitted by Mr John Gotelee asking how much land would be put aside for future infrastructure needs, if the piecemeal option for development of the LRIE was chosen, would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (g) The question submitted by Mr Stuart Gourley which sought assurance that there was enough PPE in schools was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.
- (h) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall on the subject of whether the Council would do an on-line video showing WBC's waste recycling process would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Environment.
- (i) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall on the subject of the recycling of clear transparent plastics would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Environment.
- (j) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall on the subject of the public engagement session on the London Road Industrial Estate would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (k) The question submitted by Mr Ian Hall on the subject of building flats in a flood plain would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (l) The question submitted by Mr Alan Pearce querying the drainage system installed when constructing the new A339 Road junction into the London Road Industrial Estate was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (m) The question submitted by Mr Alan Pearce on the subject of the settings of the devices installed to attenuate the flow and stop the urban runoff flowing into the Thames Water surface water sewer, when constructing the drainage system for the new A339 Road junction into the London Road Industrial Estate was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (n) The question submitted by Mr Alan Pearce on the subject of the Flood Risk Assessment for the A339/London Road Industrial Estate access was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (o) The question submitted by Mr Vaughan Miller on the subject of the projected total costs of closure of the Faraday Road Football Ground was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- (p) The question submitted by Mr Peter Gower on the subject of the number of households currently threatened with homelessness and eligible for assessment and a personalised housing plan was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (q) The question submitted by Mr Peter Gower on the subject of the number of Council employees currently working with a household threatened with homelessness was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (r) The question submitted by Mr John Gotelee on the subject of the experience and qualifications in planning and housing held by the Portfolio Holder would receive a written answer from the Leader of the Council.

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- (s) The question submitted by Mr Paul Morgan on the subject of the land use class definition of the Newbury Football Ground would receive a written answer from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development:

30. Petitions

Councillor Lee Dillon presented a petition, of behalf of Ms Sue Lister, containing 2,217 signatures which asked West Berkshire Council to protect and save Thatcham's ancient woodland and wildlife site for future generations. The petition was referred to the Service Director – Environment for a response.

31. Communications and Engagement Strategy 2020-2023 (EX3951)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning a proposed strategy for enhancing the Council's communications and engagement activities over the coming three years.

Councillor Lynne Doherty in introducing the report stated that in November 2019 the Council had invited the LGA to conduct a Peer Review. One of the key themes coming out of the feedback from that review was that the Council had been hiding its light under a bushel. They recommended that the Council should make communication central to the Council's thinking and at the heart of what it did for both residents and staff. This Strategy recognised that an effective engagement spectrum was wide and varied in approach. Feedback received in respect of the communications around Covid over recent months had been very positive and residents felt that they were being kept informed on recent events. However, in order to keep this level of communication going it was recognised that additional resources would be required. It would also be necessary to communicate directly to local residents and therefore a new delivery platform was set out within the Strategy. This was an e-mail platform and Councillor Doherty was pleased to announce that just prior to the meeting she had been informed that the Council had over 50,000 subscribers who had between them signed up to some 86,000 topic subscriptions. In the recent residents' survey over 81% of residents had stated that they preferred e-mail contact to any other form of contact.

The Strategy was looking to enhance consultation and engagement using different methods in order to actively seek feedback which would help to assist, shape and form policy. It was the deeper levels of engagement which involved collaboration and empowerment that had not been as fully formed as she would like and hopefully this was addressed in the Strategy. This should be done jointly with local residents and it was therefore necessary to ensure that appropriate mechanisms were in place in order to hear their voices. The community engagement framework set out in the report identified the first wave of priority actions that needed to be taken forward to improve engagement but also left a degree of flexibility to enable the Council to try different methods and to obtain feedback from residents on their preferred options. They would inform the Delivery Plan that would be brought back to the Corporate First Programme Board for sign off and monitoring going forward.

Councillor Doherty specifically highlighted paragraph 9.4 of the Strategy which set out the outcomes that the Council was seeking to deliver and section 10 which focused specifically on what the Council was seeking to do and gave details around some of the actions. Councillor Doherty felt that effective communication and engagement was vital to ensure that the services and the way that they were delivered met the needs of the residents that the authority served.

The report was seconded by Councillor Hilary Cole.

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Councillor Richard Somner referred to the Volunteer Centre for West Berkshire and in particular the work that they had done and continued to do in difficult circumstances. He asked if clarification could be provided as to how they would be included in this programme of work going forward and what their role might be. Councillor Doherty recognised the huge amount of work that they did in the area and stated that the process needed to be fair and equitable. The Council would be consulting with potential partners and other people who might want to be involved to make sure that there was an objective view across the district. Discussions would take place with stakeholders and the Volunteer Centre would certainly be involved in that process.

Councillor Tony Vickers supported the aim of the Strategy but referred to paragraph 4.11 in respect of the Resident Survey held in May 2020. He was concerned that too much emphasis had been placed on the results of the survey. The consultation had been on-line only and not all people had access to on-line methods of communication. These were very often the people that the Council needed to reach e.g. the vulnerable, elderly people with disabilities etc. Councillor Vickers asked for reassurance that this was not a self-selecting biased sample and that it tied in with the disbanding of the existing Community Panel and the reforming of something to replace it e.g. a Citizen Jury where there would be a representative panel. Councillor Lynne Doherty replied that the Council was aware that it had not received the breadth of response that it would have liked but the survey had been undertaken during Covid and obviously it was therefore necessary to ensure that it was an on-line survey as communication channels had been limited. When the survey results had been analysed it became evident that there was an under representation of younger people and discussions were being held with the Education Service to consider how the Council could engage more effectively with younger residents so that their voice could be heard. It was proposed that the survey would be repeated on a regular basis which would include actually going out and engaging with people in their communities.

Councillor Adrian Abbs noted that the Strategy referred to BAME and BAMER and he asked if there could be some consistency throughout the Strategy as to which was the appropriate term to use. Councillor Lynne Doherty noted that Councillor Owen Jeffery had also raised a number of typographical errors in the paper and the Chief Executive would be amending those prior to it going to digital print.

Councillor Erik Pattenden noted that there did not seem to be any baseline or milestones within the document and he therefore queried how it would be known whether any of the actions arising out of the Strategy were actually going to address the issues that had been identified. Councillor Doherty confirmed that there was a clear direction of travel within the Strategy and it was the Delivery Plan which would deliver the objectives set out within the Strategy and this would be monitored by the Customer First Programme Board.

Councillor Jeff Brooks referred to the issue around the use of on-line methods for consultation. He felt that it was essential to use traditional methods like paper in order to engage with hard to reach groups. There was not one mention of paper within the channels it was intended to use to communicate with these groups. Councillor Doherty responded that over recent months when the Council had important messages to get out to the community it had actually had leaflets delivered through doors and had put up posters across the district. Paper communications did not always fit with the environmentally friendly solutions in any event which was why there needed to be a balance. Looking at the demographics it was actually more of the older generation who had responded to the survey using on-line methods.

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Councillor Lee Dillon noted that in a previous response it was mentioned that the Delivery Plan would be monitored through the Customer First Programme Board. However, that Board did not have cross-party representation and he felt that it should come back through the Executive. In relation to the commissioning of a Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO) despite the statements regarding partnerships and of not doing 'to' communities but doing 'with' them, this Strategy would have the opposite effect. In terms of the commissioning the Council already had a relationship with the Volunteer Centre and the services it provided for many years and indeed it had relied on the goodwill of the Volunteer Centre throughout the pandemic. The Volunteer Centre had built trust with the community and was well respected in West Berkshire. It had funding in place until March 2022 and it was therefore felt that the process should not start until the Autumn of 2021 as there could be a situation where two publicly funded organisations would be running concurrently which would be a duplication of effort. The Council should be working with the Volunteer Centre to build capacity. Councillor Lynne Doherty confirmed that the Council respected every partner that it worked with but she still felt that there was a need to go through a fair tendering process. She had had several discussions with the Volunteer Centre over recent months but this was about ambition and it was an important part of the strategy going forward. She recognised the work that had been done by the Volunteer Centre over the years and this was not about undermining that at all. This was about the scalability of an operation to ensure that the Council was future proofing how it engaged with all of its communities going forward. It provided an opportunity to have a conversation with all involved so that they could all feed into what it would look like which could then be tendered through a clear procurement process. She expected that the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire would be involved in that process and if they won the tender it would give them the security to build on. Councillor Jeff Beck concurred with the comments made by Councillor Dillon.

Councillor David Marsh queried if the report had been produced internally or whether external consultants had been involved. There seemed to be a lot of jargon in the strategy and he asked for an assurance that any communication should be in plain English as the one thing that would put members of the public off of engaging with the strategy was the use of jargon and management speak. Councillor Lynne Doherty confirmed that this was something that she was keen to achieve and there was something in the strategy about the use of plain English. Councillor Marsh asked who sat on the Communications Steering Group and it was confirmed that this was an Officer group who met weekly. Councillor Marsh stated that during the Covid pandemic the communications from the Council had been good but in terms of consulting he felt that the record had been generally poor, for example, the consultation on charging for green bins. Councillor Doherty commented that a consultation framework was in place but it was recognised that the Council could do more and since she had become Leader she was trying to ensure that that was the case. For example, the consultation on the Economic Development Strategy had consisted of a different level and form of consultation. Councillor Marsh asked if it was proposed to communicate more effectively with elected Members of the authority and he referred to an incident where he had only been informed of a significant planning application in his ward from a resident. Councillor Doherty confirmed that a lot of communication had taken place with Members e.g. a weekly e-mail, briefings and Member Development sessions. She suggested that Councillor Marsh should have a word with Planning as he should be copied in to any planning applications in his ward. Councillor Marsh also raised the point about the Leader writing the weekly blog and whether that was appropriate. Councillor Doherty responded that both she and the Chief Executive had been working jointly throughout the pandemic. There was nothing political about the blogs and she would have no issue with that whoever the Leader was.

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Councillor Owen Jeffery referred to page 39 paragraph 4.4 and the comments around engaging with Town and Parish Councils. He felt that the Council had a long way to go in terms of engaging with them. Councillor Lynne Doherty stated that she had a good level of communication with her Parish Councils – she attended meetings regularly, wrote a monthly report and had really good levels of communication with them. It was down to all Members to ensure that Town and Parish Councils were informed and that this communication was happening. Town and Parish Councils received the weekly updates and the Council would also be hosting a District/Parish Conference shortly to which all Town/Parish Councils had been invited to send representatives.

Councillor Hilary Cole agreed that the Council had worked hard over recent months to significantly increase the level of communication with local residents and the ways that the Council was looking to engage tied in very well with the recently announced government initiative to sustain the community spirit.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The actions set out in paragraph 2.9 of the attached document be approved;
- (2) The financial implications associated with these actions and how it was proposed to address them be noted;
- (3) It was noted that the Delivery Plan would be submitted to the Customer First Programme Board for approval by the end of November 2020.

Reason for the decision: The need to enhance the Council's communication and engagement activities had been highlighted from a number of different directions not least the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic. This Paper sought to address this requirement through the development of a comprehensive Strategy with a range of recommendations aimed at enhancing both external and internal communications and the Council's wider engagement activities.

Other options considered: None.

32. Proposals for future Community Infrastructure Levy spending (EX3965)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) which looked at reshaping the priorities that CIL income was used to support. The report sought to review CIL income to provide further support for community led schemes as well as reshaping support so that it was more closely aligned to the Council Strategy approved in the previous year, which in turn reflected the Adopted Local Plan.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon in introducing the report stated that the paper sought to implement a pilot scheme to allocate half a million pounds from CIL funds to distribution to community groups to use on worthy local infrastructure schemes. A bidding process would be in place where community groups could apply directly to the Council for this top slice of self-funding. The vetting process would be similar to that used for Member bids. The funds would need to be spent on projects which met the definition of infrastructure.

The paper also recommended that the Council was not proposing to change the current percentage allocation of CIL funds. It was a way of getting funds to good projects to help communities prosper.

The report was seconded by Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter.

Councillor Tony Vickers stated that it was good that the Council was earning money through its developments but it did not explain in the paper why there was such a massive underspend of CIL funds. He was worried that the Council might lose some of this money as he was aware that if it did not at least commit to spend on a particular

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project, within a certain time, then the money had to be returned to the developer. Councillor Mackinnon responded that the amount of CIL funds spent did not actually reflect what had been included in the Capital Programme. Councillor Hilary Cole clarified that she did not think that CIL money had to be returned to the developer as had been the case with s106 contributions.

Councillor Carolyn Culver noted that up to now 10% had been allocated in table 1.1 and 40% had been profiled in table 1.2. She stated that this was a significant shortfall and she was particularly interested about the money allocated for cycleways and how that compared to the money given for Active Travel. Could some of the CIL funding be used outside of Newbury as a lot of the Active Travel fund had been spent in the Newbury and Thatcham area? Councillor Ross Mackinnon felt that there needed to be a level of prudence here as there were uncertainties over future CIL levels. He hoped that the forecast CIL income levels did materialise in which case they would be allocated towards the capital programme but it was important not to over commit at this stage.

Councillor Adrian Abbs noted that there was a £5m underspend in CIL funding and suggested that more should be spent on environmental projects in order to meet the Environmental Emergency Declaration. He also noted that the percentage profiling was proposed to remain unchanged but they did not implicitly mention anything to do with targeting the emergency declaration. He would like to see a specific percentage of the CIL funding to be spent in this way. Councillor Mackinnon stated that no-one wanted to not spend CIL funding but the focus of this report was about top slicing a sum of £500k for small community projects.

Councillor Lee Dillon stated that the criteria for parish funding was 50%. Newbury and Thatcham would have a healthy precept but there would be some parishes who had very limited precepts and he wanted to be confident that if they could not match fund then they should not lose out on infrastructure money for the whole district. He therefore asked if the report could make clear at 4.10(d) that match funding was an aspiration rather than a necessity. Councillor Mackinnon replied that the schemes would be matched against the criteria set out in paragraph 4.10 but match funding would be an argument in favour but it would not be a hard and fast criteria.

Councillor Jeff Brooks felt that the Council was being too risk adverse as the forecast income was £20m and yet only £8k had been included in the Capital Strategy. It needed to be more ambitious. Councillor Mackinnon agreed that the Council wanted to allocate schemes but it was being cautious as it needed to be careful not to over commit funds – only time would tell.

Councillor Tony Vickers referred to Appendix A and in particular the On Street Electric Charging Points project which seemed to be dependent upon a Government grant bid. Councillor Mackinnon confirmed that he would get back to Councillor Vickers on that.

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter concluded that this was a really excellent initiative and the benefit would be around flexibility and responsiveness. This would help a wider range of groups and organisations as well as Town and Parish Councils. There needed to be sound robust governance around the projects to ensure that they were robust. He referred to the point made about match funding and the fact that there were other sources of funding as well and in particular Greenham Common Trust or the Member bid process could also contribute towards making projects happen.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the continued focus on the Adopted Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan and schemes highlighted in the Council Strategy (2019-23) and Recovery Strategy that

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supported this be approved and would be included in the Capital Strategy 2021 onwards.

- (2) A continued profiling of CIL funds of 35% education, 35% transport, 10% other services, with 15% to parishes (or 25% if they had a neighbourhood plan) and 5% for administration be approved.
- (3) A one off sum of up to £500k be approved to be used to “ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships” by allocating funding for community groups to bid to support the Adopted Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan Implications and Impact Assessment.

Reason for the decision: To ensure that there was a stronger link between CIL expenditure and the Council Strategy and, following the Covid-19 outbreak, the Covid Recovery Strategy.

Other options considered:

The Council could continue as it currently did; this would not have an impact as the CIL forecasts were already included in the financial forecasts. However, it did miss some opportunities as proposed in the paper.

Given uncertainties over future CIL levels, the Council could spread CIL out over an even longer period of time. This had been discounted due to the length of time to deliver schemes the CIL was intended to support.

33. **Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Task Group Report on the London Road Industrial Estate (EX3956)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 8) concerning a response to the recommendations made in the report from the Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) task group on the London Road Industrial Estate (LRIE) that was presented to Members of the OSMC in July 2020.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon reported that the LRIE task group had been set up in April 2019 to review the LRIE project to 2018. The aim of the task group was to review what had been learnt from the project and to report back to the OSMC. The report had been received in July 2020. An action plan had been developed in relation to each of the 15 recommendations set out in the report where appropriate. A number of the recommendations had already been addressed as the Council had clearly developed its practices over the last ten years. However, the report had concluded that the Council had not intended to act illegally and had had regard to its legal obligations and the public contract regulations. The evidence was also clear that the Council had acted reasonably after taking expert advice from external providers. The task group would not have made any different decisions regarding the proposed development of the site.

Councillor Lynne Doherty seconded the report.

Councillor Graham Bridgman referred to recommendation 5 on page 134 of the agenda in respect of each Committee/Board reviewing the Terms of Reference on an annual basis. He felt that reviewing the Terms of Reference automatically was not the right approach and felt that the recommendation should be amended to state that they should be reviewed on a regular basis. Councillor Mackinnon felt that an annual review could take place at a very high level and would therefore not be that onerous. Councillor Bridgman responded that if it was suggested that it only needed to be a very high level review then the response to the recommendation needed to be amended to reflect that.

Councillor Lee Dillon was a member on the task group and he said that it was not necessarily to review the contents of the terms of reference but when a new member came on to the Committee then they needed to be made aware of the Terms of

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Reference so that they were aware what they were making decisions on and whether they were a decision making group or not. What he could not see in the report in the response from the Executive was any form of apology for the poor project management that had taken place at the time and he felt that some recommendations and an apology from the Administration was required. Councillor Mackinnon agreed but an organisation of this size would always be improving their project management methodology and internal processes as time progressed. The Council would always seek to improve methodology whenever it could and he felt that the response to the recommendations had demonstrated that.

Councillor Jeff Brooks referred to the comprehensive Project Management Methodology which had been included as an appendix to the report. However, it did not appear to be mandated across the authority. He also referred to project creep where the price kept increasing over time. A clever budget manager would take advantage of that loophole and he would like to have some reassurance that that would be tracked early on within the sign up process. Councillor Mackinnon confirmed that the Project Management Methodology had improved a great deal over the years and he was confident that the right processes were in place. However, the same level of methodology would not be appropriate for smaller projects. In relation to project creep Councillor Mackinnon felt that budget users were acting with integrity but he would ensure that it was closely monitored.

Councillor Steve Masters stated that the remit of the inquiry had been quite tight and he asked Councillor Mackinnon if he thought that the absence of any testimony from Les Gaulton was significant and what attempts had been made to contact him at the start of the process. Councillor Mackinnon responded that he had every faith that the task group operated in a proper manner but that question would need to be answered by the task group and in particular Sarah Clarke as it was she who had led the task group.

Councillor Owen Jeffery recalled when he was last on the Executive that he had been briefed about the subject of project management and the relevant software. He now found it incredible that a project of this size and importance never received a proper project management style. He recognised that the current Leader had not been involved at that time but the Chief Executive had been and he apparently had not felt it to be appropriate to put in and run proper project management software on such an enormous and vitally important issue. The result was that public money had been wasted and he asked whether there was any action that could or should have been taken on that issue. Councillor Lynne Doherty stated that the actions that had been laid out within the recommendations were the actions that she would approve.

Councillor Lynne Doherty thanked the task group for all the hard work that they had undertaken but she felt that the priority for the residents and businesses of West Berkshire was to move forward in order to provide them with economic stability and to make West Berkshire an attractive place to come and do business. She was happy with the overall conclusions and recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED that the Executive noted the action plan in response to the recommendations raised by the LRIE task group.

Reason for the decision: To consider the report and recommendations from the LRIE task group.

Other options considered: The Executive could opt to do nothing with the report and leave it as it was; however, it was important that lessons were learnt where action had not been taken already in respect of the issues raised.

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34. 4 The Sector - new lease (Urgent Item)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 9) concerning the creation of a new lease. West Berkshire Council had freehold ownership of an office building in Newbury, 4 The Sector, which formed part of the Council's commercial property portfolio. The building comprised 28,700 sq. ft. of high grade office space and was currently vacant.

The purpose of this report was to recommend the creation of a new lease, for 8,000 sq. ft. (circa 28%) of the building.

RESOLVED that delegation be given to the Service Director for Strategy and Governance to enter into the lease for 8,000 sq. ft. of office space in 4 The Sector on the terms described in the report.

Reason for the decision: To secure occupation of the building.

Other options considered:

- (1) To decline the proposed lease and continue to market the vacant property on the basis of letting 100% of the space to a single tenant.
- (2) To dispose of the freehold, removing the property from the portfolio.
- (3) To convert the office space under permitted development to residential.

35. 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) The question submitted by Councillor Dennis Benneyworth querying whether the Council was ready to support those in economic hardship would receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.
- (b) The question submitted by Councillor Tom Marino on the subject of whether the Council would be signing up to the government's £2bn Kickstart scheme to help young people between the ages of 16 – 24 on Universal Credit into the work place was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance.
- (c) The question submitted by Councillor Peter Argyle on the subject of what the Council was doing to help young people in to employment was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.
- (d) The question submitted by Councillor Rick Jones on the subject of why the Culture Strategy and the Leisure Strategy were being developed in the midst of Covid-19 was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture.
- (e) The question submitted by Councillor Garth Simpson asking what provision was still in place in the district, after the ending of government food parcels, for those in our communities who were in clinical need of further support or experiencing food poverty was answered by the Leader of the Council.
- (f) The question submitted by Councillor Dennis Benneyworth on the subject of what preparation the Council had made in order to deliver the £500 Test and Trace Support Payment announced by the Government as part of the more recent response measures to Covid-19 would receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.
- (g) The question submitted by Councillor Tom Marino on the subject of how the Council's commercial property portfolio had been performing over the sixth months or so since the Covid pandemic emerged was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

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- (h) The question submitted by Councillor Peter Argyle on the subject of how the Council was supporting young unaccompanied asylum seekers was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.
- (i) The question submitted by Councillor Rick Jones on the subject of Covid testing capacity in the district was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture.
- (j) The question submitted by Councillor Phil Barnett on the subject of what measures were proposed to ensure the animals on Greenham Common were safe from vehicles along the perimeter roads was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside.
- (k) The question submitted by Councillor Carolyn Culver on the subject of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Environment.
- (l) The question submitted by Councillor Steve Masters on the subject of potential approaches by private security companies to be covid wardens in West Berkshire would receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.
- (m) The question submitted by Councillor David Marsh on the subject of the benefit to businesses in Newbury Town Centre from “people driving past their shops and restaurants” was answered by the Leader of the Council.
- (n) The question submitted by Councillor David Marsh on the subject of progress with implementing an agreed speed limit reduction was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside.
- (o) The question submitted by Councillor David Marsh on the subject of whether targets had been achieved from the introduction of the 24-hour traffic-free zone in parts of Newbury Town Centre would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside.
- (p) The question submitted by Councillor David Marsh on the potential to reintroduce the 24-hour traffic-free zone in parts of Newbury Town Centre would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside.
- (q) The question submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of the steps taken by the Council to ensure the impact of the withdrawal of services for clients and their carers (introduced in the March Coronavirus Act) has been understood and mitigated against was answered by the Portfolio Holders for Adult Social Care and Children, Young People and Education.
- (r) The question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the Council's commitment to the local mental health concordat was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Community Wellbeing, Leisure and Culture:
- (s) The question submitted by Councillor Lee Dillon querying whether the Council would be submitting a response to the Government consultation paper on Transparency and Competition was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (t) The question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of the timeframe for the build out of large housing schemes and ‘local centres’ was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.
- (u) The Question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the proposal to create wildflower verges on our rural roads and the impact of this on the safety of

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pedestrians and horse-riders who often needed to use verges to avoid traffic was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Countryside.

- (v) The question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of covid marshals would receive a written response from the Leader of the Council.
- (w) The question submitted by Councillor Alan Macro on the subject of the condition of Walnut Close Care Home would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care.
- (x) The question submitted by Councillor Erik Pattenden on the subject of the support being provided to those children in West Berkshire who were self-isolating at home was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.
- (y) The question submitted by Councillor Erik Pattenden querying how many early years providers in West Berkshire were at risk of closure due to financial difficulties would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.
- (z) The question submitted by Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of additional solar capacity in West Berkshire was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Environment.

36. Exclusion of Press and Public

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

37. 4 The Sector - new lease (Urgent Item)

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

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 12) concerning the creation of a new lease, for 8,000 sq. ft. (circa 28%) of the office building in Newbury, 4 The Sector, which formed part of the Council's commercial property portfolio.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

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

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

(The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 7.55pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature