

## Item 19:

### Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 17 March 2022

- (a) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Lynne Doherty:

#### Ukraine

*“West Berkshire Council is united in its condemnation of the armed attack on Ukraine by the Russian Federation and urges Vladimir Putin to immediately and unconditionally cease this unjust and evil war.*

*West Berkshire Council would encourage residents that wish to offer financial assistance to do so by donating to the Disasters Emergency Committee or the British Red Cross.*

*West Berkshire Council will welcome Ukraine Refugees and partake in resettling Ukraine Refugees in West Berkshire when we have details of the scheme through the South East Migration Partnership.*

*West Berkshire Council stands with the people of Ukraine and expresses its unwavering commitment to democracy, multilevel governance and human rights.”*

- (b) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter:**

#### Levels of sewage discharge by water companies

*“This Council considers that the level of sewage discharge by water companies into our rivers is unacceptable - sewage contamination can have a devastating impact on fish and other aquatic wildlife. Further, if people swim, bathe or participate in activities in or around sewage contaminated water, there are significant risks to public health such as gastroenteritis, ear, nose and throat infections, skin infections, and worse.*

*This Council believes that water companies must significantly reduce sewage discharges from storm overflows as a priority.*

*This Council welcomes the Environment Act 2021, which has created a new duty on HM Government to produce (by September 2022) a statutory plan to reduce discharges from storm overflows, and to produce a report setting out the actions that would be needed to eliminate discharges from storm overflows in England, together with the costs and benefits of those actions.*

*This Council also welcomes the new statutory duty requiring water companies to produce comprehensive Drainage and Sewerage Management Plans, which means that they must set out how they will manage and develop their drainage and sewerage systems over a minimum 25-year planning horizon, including how storm overflow issues will be addressed.*

*Of specific local relevance, this Council welcomes Thames Water’s initiation of a significant restoration project, including an end to sewage discharges, for the River Pang. We look forward to seeing results of this work as it unfolds.”*

## Item 19:

### Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 17 March 2022

- (c) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Steve Masters:**

Reduce the impact of the fuel crisis on residents of West Berkshire.

*“Council notes:*

*Residents across West Berkshire are facing a cost-of-living crisis, driven by the dramatic rise in fossil fuel prices. The poorest people are being hit hardest, with many now facing the stark choice between heating and eating.*

*Council resolves to:*

*Call on our local MPs to lobby the Government to fund a nationwide retrofit insulation scheme from a windfall tax on the inflated profits of fossil fuel companies.*

*Furthermore the Council calls on our MPs to lobby the government to suspend VAT on domestic energy bills to reduce the impact on consumers here in West Berkshire.”*

- (d) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Steve Masters:**

Discharge into rivers and coastal outflows

*“Council notes:*

*Discharge of sewages into our rivers and coastal out flows has become a growing program due to chronic under investment by the private companies who are responsible for maintaining our waste systems*

*Indeed the privatised companies have paid dividends to extract huge profits while neglecting the infrastructure. £57bn since 1991.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/01/england-privatised-water-firms-dividends-shareholders>

*It is worth noting that this is over 1/3rd of cost of investment that MP Laura Farris has quoted as needing to have been spent to bring the mostly Victorian infrastructure up to standard.*

*This is very much a local issue as highlighted by Feargal Sharkey in September 2020.*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-54024479>

[https://twitter.com/Feargal\\_Sharkey/status/1300705626574802945?s=20](https://twitter.com/Feargal_Sharkey/status/1300705626574802945?s=20)

*The people of West Berkshire are understandably angry about this especially at a time of growing environmental awareness across West Berkshire and the country at large.*

*When people swim, bath or participate in activities in and around sewage contaminated water there are significant risks to public health such as gastroenteritis, ear, nose and throat infections, skin infections, and even hepatitis and e-coli.*

## Item 19:

### Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 17 March 2022

<https://www.sas.org.uk/water-quality/>

Council resolves to:

1. Request a formal explanation from our local MP's as to why they voted down Lords Amendment 45\* \*Lords Amendment 45 to the Environment Bill would have placed a legal duty on water companies in England and Wales "to make improvements to their sewerage systems and demonstrate progressive reductions in the harm caused by discharges of untreated sewage". MPs Laura Farris and John Redwood voted to defeat the Lords amendment (Alok Sharma did not vote).
2. We also request that the Council's Oversight and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC) robustly question Thames Water at their scheduled appearance. With particular focus on the amount of sewage discharged into local waterways and proposed investment in improvements to infrastructure planned to eliminate such practices.
3. West Berkshire Council to condemn the discharging of raw sewage into our waterways, and call upon all stakeholders to work together to end this environmentally destructive practice which also damages public health."

(e) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Tony Vickers:**

#### Garage Blocks

*"This Council*

*Notes that -*

1. Standard size garages are too small for modern cars and therefore no longer count as parking spaces in new housing developments or in calculations on the need for Residents Parking Zones;
2. The District has many older post-WWII housing developments which include significant areas of garage blocks that are no longer fit for their original purpose of providing secure parking for local residents' cars and are used – if at all – for general storage, while many homes have no street frontage and no parking spaces because these garage blocks were built for them;
3. There is no 'use class' in planning law for residential parking;
4. Car ownership is much greater now than when these estates were built and that many of them, in all parts of the District, have problems with on-street parking and access for emergency and other larger vehicles;
5. Some garage blocks have been attracting anti-social behaviour, have no overall management structure and their appearance has a negative impact on the amenity of residents;

## Item 19:

### Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 17 March 2022

6. *Others have been bought up by local housing developers resulting in permanent loss of a potential parking area for residents and visitors.*

*This Council therefore calls for:-*

- (1) planning and transport policies to be discussed at the appropriate forums, aimed at achieving:-*
  - A. First call on future redevelopment of garage blocks to be for parking for local residents, as was their original purpose;*
  - B. Dedicated Car Club spaces (and EV charging points) within any redeveloped garage blocks;*
  - C. Spaces reserved on-street, where this proves impossible, for properties with no road frontage.*
- (2) Investigation into the ownership of these areas, including approach roads that are not public highways, with a view to pursuing compulsory purchase to bring some of them back into use primarily for parking;*

*Furthermore if current legislation does not allow such policies to be adopted locally through our emerging Local Plan and Transport Plans, Council will lobby our MPs and the LGA to change the law so that it can happen.*

- (f) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Tony Vickers:**

#### Land Reform

*“This Council*

*Endorses the 2019 report “Grounds for Change” by SHELTER, supported by CPRE, which recognises that:-*

- 1. A home is a fundamental human need;*
- 2. In the last 20 years the value of land has risen by 550% and all the increase in total national wealth in the last 10 years is accounted for by land value;*
- 3. Almost all increase in land value comes not from anything the landowner does but from investment in infrastructure, growth in prosperity, enterprise of businesses, earnings of working people, and crucially the granting of planning consent;*
- 4. The crisis in affordable housing supply cannot be solved without land reform that ensures much more of the land value is recovered for public benefit, to pay for essential infrastructure, including measures to tackle the consequences of climate change.*

*Council therefore resolves to write formally to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to express its support for further measures to reform the 1961 Land Compensation Act more in line with the policies of other developed countries, which enable public bodies such as Local Authorities to acquire land – especially green field land needed for housing - at prices much closer to existing use value than this Act permits.”*

## Item 19:

### Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 17 March 2022

(g) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Alan Macro:**

#### Building of a new hospital

*“Council notes that:*

- *The Royal Berkshire Hospital Foundation Trust has been consulting on various options to re-develop the hospital. Several options involve various levels of redevelopment of the existing site and one option the building of a new hospital on a new site.*
- *The existing site is very cramped and contains a mixture of new, old and very old buildings, some of which are pre-fabricated. Many have very poor insulation leading to uncomfortable conditions for patients in hot or cold weather and also to poor energy efficiency.*
- *Re-development of the existing site is difficult because of its cramped and dense layout.*
- *It is very difficult for residents of some parts of West Berkshire to reach the hospital using public transport.*
- *Car parking in and around the hospital is restricted and expensive.*
- *It can be time consuming to travel to the hospital by any means, including ambulance, at peak times.*

*Council therefore resolves that its preferred option is the building of a new hospital on a new site.”*