

# 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 OCTOBER 2010**

**Executive Councillors Present:** Barbara Alexander, Pamela Bale, Jeff Beck, David Betts, Keith Chopping, Adrian Edwards, Roger Hunneman, Graham Jones, Royce Longton, Gordon Lundie, Alan Macro, Gwen Mason, Joe Mooney, David Rendel, Anthony Stansfeld, Julian Swift-Hook, Tony Vickers, Quentin Webb and Keith Woodhams

**Councillors Present:** Jeff Beck, Adrian Edwards, Roger Hunneman, Royce Longton, Alan Macro, Gwen Mason, David Rendel, Julian Swift-Hook, Tony Vickers, Quentin Webb and Keith Woodhams.

**Also Present:** John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Teresa Bell (Corporate Director - Community Services), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Margaret Goldie (Corporate Director - Children and Young People) and David Holling (Head of Legal & Electoral), Linda Pye (Policy Officer) and Moira Fraser (Democratic Services Manager).

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Hilary Cole and Councillor Alan Law

#### PART I

##### 56. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

##### 57. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Barbara Alexander declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, and reported that, as her interest was personal and prejudicial, she would be leaving the meeting during the course of consideration of the matter.

Councillors Julian Swift-Hook and Adrian Edwards declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, but reported that, as their interest was personal and not prejudicial, they determined to remain to take part in the debate.

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook declared an interest in Agenda Item 10, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he determined to remain to take part in the debate.

##### 58. Public Questions

There were no public questions submitted.

##### 59. Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

##### 60. Council Tax - Single Person Discount (SPD) Review - Outcome (EX2141)

*(Councillors Barbara Alexander declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, by virtue of the fact that she was in receipt of Single Person Discount. Councillor Alexander determined that as her interest was personal and prejudicial she would be leaving the chamber and would not take part in the debate or vote on the matter)*

## EXECUTIVE - 14 OCTOBER 2010 - MINUTES

*(Councillors Julian Swift-Hook and Adrian Edwards declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, by virtue of the fact that they were in receipt of Single Person Discount. Councillors Edwards and Swift-Hook reported that, as their interest was personal and not prejudicial they determined to stay in the meeting and take part in the debate.)*

*Councillor Barbara Alexander left the meeting at 6.34pm and returned at 6.45pm.*

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 6) concerning an update on the outcome of the Single person Discount Review undertaken using an external service and to consider its future use.

Councillor Keith Chopping in introducing the item noted that the Executive had approved the use of the service from Northgate (Council Tax software provider) during the previous year. The process involved the verification of the Council's Single Person Discount records with records held by Experian. Although many households were entitled to claim the discount there were still some residents incorrectly claiming the discount. Since the start of the review in 2006/07 a cumulative additional £4m of Council Tax had been collected.

Councillor Tony Vickers was concerned about the cost of the exercise and queried whether the same results could be achieved using the data already held by the Council. Steve Duffin explained that the comparison of internal records already took place and information was submitted to the National Fraud Initiative which fed back any discrepancies. Steve Duffin also explained that information about claiming Single Person Discounts was included in the annual Council Tax bills and the reminders that were sent out. David Holling confirmed that there were restrictions around what information could be collected in compiling the Electoral Register and this would not meet those requirements so this means of disseminating information could not be used.

Councillor Alan Macro felt that the £70 penalty was not a deterrent and queried if the Council could increase the penalty? Steve Duffin explained that the penalty was set out in the legislation and the Council did not have the authority to increase it.

The Executive agreed that paragraphs 3.1 (Executive Summary) 4.1 would be amended to state that 'it is recommended that we make use of the Northgate service on a two yearly basis.'

**RESOLVED** that the ongoing use of the Northgate/Experian external service be approved.

**Reason for the decision:** To approve the recommended action.

**Other options considered:** Not to continue to use the service.

### 61. **Response to the Scrutiny Review into Section 106 contributions (EX2156)**

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 7) concerning a response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission's review into s106 contributions. Councillor Keith Chopping in introducing the report stated that a cross-party task group consisting of Members and Officers had conducted the review. The findings and recommendations, which had been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission in June 2010, were set out in the report.

Councillor Chopping reported that the review had determined that in general the system was operating well and West Berkshire Council was acknowledged as an example of good practice which other local authorities had been encouraged to follow. The

## EXECUTIVE - 14 OCTOBER 2010 - MINUTES

recommendations set out within the report were intended to make the Council's practices even more effective.

**RESOLVED that** the Officers' response in relation to the recommendations be endorsed.

**Reason for the decision:** To provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

**Other options considered:** None

### 62. **Members' Question(s)**

(a) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational) and ICT submitted by Councillor Tony Vickers**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Tony Vickers on the subject of a merged database containing information from the local land and property gazetteer was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational) and ICT.

(b) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Education submitted by Councillor David Rendel**

A question standing in the name of Councillor David Rendel on the subject of the number of music therapists employed by the Council was answered by the Executive Member for Education.

(c) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Strategy, Performance and Community Safety submitted by Councillor Jeff Brooks**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks on the subject of the costs of holding an extraordinary Council meeting was answered by the Executive Member for Strategy, Performance and Community Safety.

(d) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational) and ICT submitted by Councillor Keith Woodhams**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams on the subject of costs of filling a pothole for the third time was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational) and ICT.

(e) **Question to be answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational) and ICT submitted by Councillor Roger Hunneman**

A question standing in the name of Councillor Roger Hunneman on the subject of progress made and any penalties levied on the gas contractor undertaking gas maintenance works in Bartholomew Street, South was answered by the Executive Member for Highways, Transport (Operational) and ICT.

### 63. **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 the Paragraphs 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 4.2 of the Constitution](#) also refers.

**64. Greenham Community Centre and MUGA Pitch (EX2026)**

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

*(Councillor Julian Swift-Hook declared a personal interest in Agenda item 10 by virtue of the fact that he was a member of the Greenham Community Association and Project Board. As his interest was personal and not prejudicial he determined to take part in the debate and vote on the matter).*

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 10) concerning the current position in relation to the Greenham Community Centre and to consider a proposal for the future management of the MUGA pitch.

**RESOLVED that** the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved.

**Reason for the decision:** to ensure that the essential refurbishment works are undertaken to the Greenham Community Centre and its future secured in the long term.

**Other options considered:** None

**65. Supporting People - Tenancy Support (EX2088)**

*(Paragraph 6 – information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority)*

The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 11) concerning the future delivery of some of the Council's Supporting People funded contracts for the delivery of tenancy support services.

**RESOLVED that** the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved.

**Reason for the decision:** to enable the remodelling and re-tendering of the contracts.

**Other options considered:** None

*(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.14 pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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