

## **Agenda Item 18:**

### **Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 06 October 2022**

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

##### Debate Not Hate Motion

*“Building on what we agreed in our Motion on Civility in Politics, this Council supports the LGA ‘Debate not Hate’ campaign.*

##### *This Council:*

- *agrees that anyone, regardless of their background or political affiliation, should feel safe to become a councillor and be proud to represent their community.*
- *believes that the increasing level of abuse and intimidation aimed at local politicians is preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election and undermining local democracy.*
- *will support the campaign to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in their communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the responses and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation.*
- *asks the Leader of the Council to sign the LGA’s public statement on behalf of the Council, and encourages all Councillors to individually sign the statement and share that they have done so on social media also”.*

#### **(b) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs:**

##### High Street Canopies

*“Given the constant temperature rises seen year on year (especially in the summer months) it is becoming critical to protect both ourselves and our economy by providing shade for humans, business and wildlife.*

*This is especially evident when walking down any of the high streets in West Berkshire and watching how people navigate the streets, many hugging the shady side of a street to avoid excessive exposure to the sun’s U.V. rays.*

*I don’t think we need to repeat some of the predicted effects of climate change, as this summer we have experienced key ones and we all remember those extreme swings and higher temperatures overall.*

*Given that all efforts so far are barely having any effect on the rise in temperatures it’s safe to conclude we must prepare as best we can. We need to make some strategic investments and changes now.*

*Most people incorrectly focus on the value of green cover from a carbon capture perspective. It’s there of course, but other benefits are more immediate and even more valuable.*

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*The motion being presented to West Berkshire Council is to commit to a process of establishing a green canopy down as many high streets as possible, as fast as possible, across the whole of West Berkshire.*

*Where it is just not possible to have fixed plants and trees, then the placement of mobile foliage can be considered.*

*A Green canopy can offer the following benefits:*

### **Natural Coolant**

*One mature tree has the same cooling power as 15 room-size air conditioners.*

### **Energy Saver**

*Carefully positioned trees can save 25 to 30 percent of energy consumption. Deciduous trees are the most beneficial for energy savings since they provide shade in the warmer months and let the sunlight shine through in the colder months.*

### **Stress Reducer**

*According to Morton Arboretum, the sight of trees reduces blood pressure, exposure to trees makes children less stressed, and drivers who can see trees are less frustrated.*

### **BioDiversity gain accelerator**

*We know there is an ongoing loss of biodiversity, so anything we do to offer a broader range of habitat is only going to help.*

### **Money multiplier**

*We know people go to places they must, but return to places they enjoy. As the Newbury Vision recently postulated, increasing the visual amenity should increase footfall and dwell time and so accelerate revenue.*

### **Stormwater Filter**

*One hundred mature trees can capture up to 100,000 gallons of rainfall per year, reducing runoff and filtering water.*

### **Peacemaker**

*Trees reduce crime and illnesses. A well-placed tree can also block noise by up to 40 percent.*

### **Oxygen Provider**

*One day's worth of oxygen for a family of four is provided by a single tree.*

### **Visual enhancer**

*Let's face it, a tree is most often nicer to look at than a building.*

### **Trees Help Fight Carbon Emissions**

*If a tree absorbs 1 ton of carbon over its lifespan, it's like erasing 11,000 miles of car emissions.*

*Therefore:*

*This Council notes:*

- That Climate change is leading to higher temperatures.*
- That Green Canopy cover can help significantly with providing shade.*
- That Newbury Town Council have passed a motion asking for WBC assistance to achieve this.*
- That Thatcham Town council have passed a motion asking for WBC assistance to achieve this.*
- That some trees that existed previously are missing.*

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- *That some trees are showing signs of stress due to either their location, care regime, or age.*

*This Council therefore resolves to:*

- *Approach interested parties (such as Parish and Town councils as well as bodies such as Newbury BID) to gauge their willingness to be involved in a rapid roll out of Green Canopies on their high streets.*
- *Commit to beginning a program of investigation on various methods of achieving green canopies that could be applied to the various scenarios that will be found in West Berkshire.*
- *Commit to replacing any existing missing trees such as the one on Newbury High Street.*
- *Undertake a quick survey of all trees to ascertain their current condition.*
- *Create a forward plan for any tree identified as needing attention”.*

### **(c) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Lynne Doherty:**

#### Cost of Living

*“This Council is concerned about the effect that the increase in the cost of living is having on the residents of West Berkshire.*

*This Council notes that if it weren't for the intervention announced by the new Prime Minister, Liz Truss, domestic electricity and gas prices would have risen by 80% in October, with further increases expected in January.*

*This Council welcomes the financial support offered, such as the new Energy Price Cap, the Energy Bills Support Scheme, and the Discretionary Fund, as well as the commitment to raise the supply of energy – particularly clean energy such as nuclear, wind, and solar.*

*This Council resolves to use the funding provided by HM Government to help residents of West Berkshire. Including, but not limited to: asking anyone who has not received their £150 rebate to get in touch so that can be distributed; encouraging residents to check if they are eligible for Council Tax Reduction; using the Household Support Fund to support those most in need with household costs such as energy bills, food, clothing and housing costs in exceptional circumstances; and considering what additional action the Council can take to help the residents of West Berkshire”.*

### **(d) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Ross Mackinnon:**

#### Rural Economy Conference

*“This council welcomes the recently published research paper by the Royal Town Planning Institute on ‘Rural Planning in the 2020s’. Our Council recognises that a thriving rural economy is essential to our prosperity and well-being. It is of vital importance and in the interests of all our residents to protect and develop our rural*

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*economy, and to encourage and enable rural businesses to start-up, develop, adapt and diversify.*

*We recognise the importance of the principle of sustainable development, and its three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. The principle of sustainable development is an important part of the National Planning Policy Framework and our own local planning policies here in West Berkshire.*

*The NPPF itself states in section 2, paragraph 9, that “Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.”*

*One such significant aspect of the character of West Berkshire is its largely rural setting. Outside of the main towns and rural service centres, the only practicable means of travelling to and from many homes and businesses in these areas is by private car. As an authority we will always seek to promote active travel and rural public transport initiatives as sustainable options to access new businesses in our beautiful countryside, however we accept that this is not going to be practical in all instances.*

*The environmental objective of sustainable development includes moving to a low carbon economy. The significant and continuing reduction in carbon emissions from petrol car engines, and the increasing take-up of electric vehicles, means that private car use is not incompatible in the long-term with the movement to a low carbon economy.*

*This council therefore urges that a site should not be considered to be in an unsustainable location by being only accessible practicably by private car. Assessment of sustainability should give particular consideration to the need to secure a diverse and adaptive rural economy balanced against wider social and environmental factors.*

*We therefore resolve to ask that the Executive hold a Rural Economy Conference in November, which will bring together rural businesses, senior Council officers and other interested parties, to consider how this Council can help our rural businesses overcome the challenges and barriers they face to encourage them to develop, diversify, adapt and thrive”.*

### **(e) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Erik Pattenden:**

#### **Declaring a Cost of Living Emergency**

*“Council notes that:*

- There has been an unprecedented increase in the cost of living, which is having a significant impact on working people, pensioners, and those on benefits.*
- This is in part caused by the rise in the Ofgem energy price cap, food and petrol/diesel price increases, rising inflation and wage growth stagnation.*

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- *The ONS report three in four adults feel very or somewhat worried about the rising costs of living*
- *According to a report by the Resolution Foundation, people are facing the worst fall in living standards since the 1970s.*
- *According to data from the ONS, a typical household will have to spend an extra £1,287 due to rising cost of essentials and tax in 2022/23, but in West Berkshire, the average household energy rise will be £2,251.28.*
- *In 2021/22 the West Berks Foodbank distributed 10,033 seven-day food parcels to local people in crisis.*
- *Between 2018 and 2021 there has been a four-fold increase in the distribution of food parcels from West Berks Foodbank to over 8600 in 2019-20 and 2020-21 (projected to be even higher this year)*
- *In addition, West Berks Foodbank supports other local charities with 1 tonne of food and essential items per month.*

*Despite the support the Council, central government and local organisations have been able to provide, it's clear that residents are experiencing serious financial challenges due to the rising cost of living, which are set to worsen, impacting directly on their financial and mental wellbeing.*

*Consequently, Council resolves to:*

- *Declare a 'Cost of Living Emergency' in West Berkshire.*
- *Ask the Executive to create a West Berkshire Financial Assistance Scheme and commit £300K to issue as additional food and fuel vouchers to approximately 4,000 residents on the lowest incomes.*
- *Host a local Cost-of-Living Emergency Summit, with stakeholders, including local Town and Parish Councils, Citizens Advice, West Berks Food Bank, Local Trades Unions, and Chambers of Commerce and organisations working to support residents facing hardship.*
- *Call on the Government to act immediately to tackle the cost of living crisis by cutting the standard rate of VAT to 17.5%, restoring the Universal Credit supplement of £20, expanding the Warm Home Discount and introducing a home insulation fund to cut heating bills and carbon emissions”.*

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

Withdraw Monks Lane planning application and avoid risking taxpayers' money

*“Council notes the decision made by the Executive to develop on its own land at the Faraday Road Football Ground. This was in conjunction with the Council's Planning Application to build a Sports Hub at the rugby ground in Monks Lane, Newbury.*

*Council further notes that the intent of the Executive has always been for the Monks Lane Sports Hub to be a replacement for the Faraday Road Football Stadium but that the Council - as land owner - commissioned that application to be heard as a standalone facility and the ground was therefore not considered or tested as a replacement for the Faraday Road Stadium. That decision is now the subject of a Judicial Review.*

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*In defending the Council's position at the Judicial Review, the Council risks spending significant amounts of West Berkshire taxpayers' money and potentially losing, with associated costs.*

*Council recalls that a previous Judicial Review on the London Road Industrial Estate resulted in a bill of £946,000 of Taxpayers' money spent on costs without the attendant Officer and staff costs, which are not calculated.*

*Council therefore resolves to withdraw from the Judicial Review legal process and instruct the Executive to withdraw this current approved application and submit a new one as a replacement facility to the Faraday Road Football Stadium".*