

# **COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**

### **TUESDAY, 21 MAY 2019**

**Councillors Present:** Steve Ardagh-Walter, Peter Argyle, Phil Barnett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Jeff Brooks, Jeff Cant, Hilary Cole, James Cole, Carolyne Culver, Lee Dillon, Lynne Doherty, Billy Drummond, Clive Hooker, Gareth Hurley, Carol Jackson-Doerge, Owen Jeffery, Rick Jones, Nassar Kessell, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Alan Macro, Thomas Marino, David Marsh, Steve Masters, Geoff Mayes, Andy Moore, Graham Pask, Erik Pattenden, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart, Martha Vickers, Tony Vickers, Andrew Williamson, Keith Woodhams and Howard Woollaston

**Also Present:** John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Sarah Clarke (Head of Legal and Strategic Support), Tess Ethelston (Group Executive (Cons)), Olivia Lewis (Group Executive (Lib Dem)), Andy Sharp (Executive Director (People)), Peta Stoddart-Crompton (Public Relations Officer), Honorary Alderman Brian Bedwell, Moira Fraser (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), Jo Reeves (Principal Policy Officer), Honorary Alderman Andrew Rowles and Jo Watt (Member Services Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Adrian Abbs, Nick Carter, Councillor Jeremy Cottam, Councillor Ross Mackinnon and Councillor Claire Rowles

## **PART I**

### **3. Chairman's Remarks**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman asked all Members to remain standing and observe a minutes' silence for former Councillors Marcus Franks and Ian Clay who had sadly passed away.

Councillor Alan Macro noted that former Councillor Clay was highly regarded in his community, was a kind man who happily gave of his time and that he would be greatly missed. Councillor Richard Somner stated that he had a wealth of knowledge and experience, had proved to be an exceptional mentor and a valued contributor to the Royal Berkshire Hospital. His passing would be a significant loss to the hospital.

Councillor Marcus Franks was described as a good friend, a genuine and kind hearted man, quick witted and highly dedicated public servant by his fellow councillors. He too would be greatly missed by his friends, colleagues, fellow Councillors and staff at the Council as well as at Sovereign Housing where he worked.

The Chairman, Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She reflected on the former councillors who had sadly passed away during her year in office.

The Chairman stated that she and the Vice Chairman had been fortunate enough to attend over 160 events over the last Municipal Year. She thanked the Officers who had supported her during the year, thanked her Vice Chairman Peter Argyle for all his help and support and especially her husband Udo for always being there for her during her very busy year.

Councillor Lynne Doherty took the opportunity to thank the Chairman for all her hard work and noted that she had been an excellent ward member over the past twelve years. She

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was a very active member of her community and her endeavours were sincerely appreciated.

### 4. **Election of the Chairman for the Municipal Year 2019/20 (C3596)**

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Lynne Doherty and seconded by Councillor Alan Law that Councillor Graham Pask be elected Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2019/20. There were no further nominations.

Councillor Lynne Doherty in proposing Councillor Pask for the role of Chairman stated that she believed that he had a raft of experience in leading meetings which would be helpful given that this would be the first year of a new administration. He also had all the skills needed to represent the Council at the range of civic events he would be invited to attend and now he would be able to rely on the support from his wife Hilary. Councillor Law commented that he was privileged to second the proposal and he knew that Councillor Pask would do an outstanding job in his second stint as Chairman.

Councillor Lee Dillon stated that Councillor Pask had proved to be a fair and impartial Chairman of the Eastern Area Planning Committee and he hoped that he would bring those characteristics to this role too.

**RESOLVED that** Councillor Graham Pask be elected as Chairman of Council for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

The Chairman read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Councillor Pask thanked the Council for electing him and Councillors Doherty, Law and Dillon for their kind words. He stated that it meant a lot to have support across the Chamber and he would endeavour to conduct the meetings as fairly and judiciously as possible. He also thanked his family for their support.

Councillor Pask thanked the outgoing Leader of the Council, Councillor Graham Jones and also the Deputy Leader of the Council Councillor Hilary Cole. He also thanked Udo Doerge for the support that he had given to the Chairman over the past year.

### 5. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2019/20 (C3597)**

The Chairman stated that he would like to nominate Councillor Clive Hooker for the position of Vice-Chairman of Council for the Municipal Year 2019/20. The nomination was seconded by Councillor Hilary Cole. There were no further nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman.

**RESOLVED that** Councillor Clive Hooker be appointed as Vice-Chairman of Council for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

The Vice-Chairman read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. Councillor Hooker thanked the Council for electing him and Councillors Pask and Cole for their kind words. He stated that he would do his utmost to fulfil the role to the best of his ability. He also thanked his wife Christine for allowing him to undertake the role.

He thanked the previous Vice Chairman, Councillor Peter Argyle, for all his hard work and dedication during the previous Municipal Year.

### 6. **Minutes**

The Chairman noted that the minutes of the 05<sup>th</sup> March 2019 would be presented to the May 2019 Council meeting.

### 7. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

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### 8. Report of the Returning Officer (C3711)

The Chairman asked Sarah Clarke on behalf of the Returning Officer to inform the Council of the process and the results of the recent elections held on 02<sup>nd</sup> May 2019.

She reported that:

- 142 candidates contested 43 seats on the District Council in 24 Wards.
- Of the 24 wards ten were single member wards, nine were two member wards and five were three member wards.
- elections were held in 14 parishes or parish wards. There were a total of 167 candidates contesting 100 seats.
- A total of 28,884 ballot papers were issued for the District Election and Town /Parish Elections.
- This resulted in a turnout of 36%.
- There were no particular issues relating to either Count and both progressed as anticipated.

On behalf of the Returning Officer she wished to thank all staff who assisted with the elections, especially the team in Strategic Support. The Returning Officer also wished to thank colleagues from Oxford City Council that had helped to support the election. He also wished to thank the election agents for their support, humour and patience.

Councillor Graham Pask offered special thanks to Clare Ockwell for her exceptional work in arranging and running the election. Councillors Dominic Boeck, Lee Dillon and David Marsh thanked the Returning Officer and his team for the exemplary way the election had been conducted.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### 9. Election of the Strong Leader (C3600)

The Council considered nominations for the Strong Leader of the Council for the next four years.

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Graham Bridgman and seconded by Councillor Hilary Cole:

That the Council:

“appoints Councillor Lynne Doherty as the Strong Leader for the next four years”.

Councillor Graham Bridgman in nominating Councillor Doherty stated that she was resourceful, enthusiastic and committed to the residents of West Berkshire.

Councillor Hilary Cole stated that the leadership qualities Councillor Doherty had demonstrated in taking the Children’s Ofsted inspection from inadequate to good in a short period of time would stand her in good stead.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

Councillor Doherty thanked Members for electing her and for their kind words. She felt that being elected as Leader was a great privilege and she would work hard to continue to make West Berkshire a great place to live, learn and work.

Councillor Doherty also thanked Councillor Graham Jones who had dedicated so much of his time to the Council and he had provided her with a solid base to work from. She

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also remembered Councillor Roger Croft and hoped that she would be able to emanate both former Leaders' honesty and integrity.

Councillor Hilary Cole also thanked Councillor Jones and stated that it had been a pleasure and a privilege to work with him.

### 10. **Appointment of the Executive by the Leader of the Council for the 2019/20 Municipal Year (C3598)**

The Leader announced the composition of the Executive for the 2019/20 Municipal Year. She explained that she had decided to reduce the number of Members on the Executive from ten to nine to reflect the changes arising from the Boundary Review.

Portfolio	Member
Leader, Strategy and Communications	Lynne Doherty
Deputy Leader, Adult Social Care	Graham Bridgman
Children, Education and Young People	Dominic Boeck
Economic Development and Planning	Hilary Cole
Environment	Steve Ardagh-Walter
Finance	Jeff Cant
Internal Governance	Howard Woollaston
Public Health and Community Wellbeing	Rick Jones
Transport and Countryside	Richard Somner

Councillor Doherty thanked the outgoing Executive for all their hard work.

### 11. **Appointment of and Allocation of Seats on Committees for the 2019/20 Municipal Year (C3599)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 10) concerning the appointment and allocation of seats on Committees for the next Municipal Year and sought to agree the Council's Policy Framework for 2019/20 as set out in paragraph 6.1 of Appendix B.

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Lynne Doherty and seconded by Councillor Graham Bridgman:

"That the Council:

1. notes that under Paragraph 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, notice has been received that the Members set out in paragraph 1.1 of Appendix B to the report are to be regarded as Members of the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Green Party Groups respectively.
2. agrees to the appointment of the various Committees and to the number of places on each as set out in paragraph 2.2 of Appendix B (Table A).

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3. agrees to the allocation of seats to the Political Groups in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1989 as set out in paragraph 3.4 of Appendix B (Table B)
4. agrees that the number of substitutes on Committees and Commissions be as set out in paragraph 4.1 of Appendix B (Table C).
5. agrees that in respect of the District and Area Planning Committees, the substitute Members are all drawn from Members representing wards within the Committee's area who are not appointed to the Committee. (Where substitutes attend the District Planning meeting they need to be drawn from the same Area Planning meeting as the Member they are substituting for)
6. approves the appointment of Members to the Committees as set out in Appendix C, subject the inclusion of Martha Vickers as a substitute in place of Billy Drummond on Western Area Planning Committee and notes the appointments set out in Appendix D, subject to the inclusion of Dennis Benneyworth in place of Howard Woollaston on the Governance and Ethics Advisory Panel ,which are in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups.
7. in accordance with Regulation 4, Schedule 3 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) (Amendment No.2) Regulations 2008, agrees that the Council's Policy Framework for 2019/20 be as set out in paragraph 6.1 of Appendix B and that any appropriate amendments be made to the Council's Constitution (Paragraph 2.5.2) should this be necessary.
8. in accordance with Regulation 5, Schedule 4 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, approves that all other plans, policies and strategies requiring approval and not included in the approved Policy Framework be delegated to the Council's Executive.
9. agrees that Paragraph 2.6.5 of Article 6, setting out the Executive Portfolios, be amended to reflect any changes made by the Leader of the Council at the Annual Council meeting.
10. Agrees that the appointment of two non-voting co-opted Parish/Town Councillors be made to the Governance and Ethics Committee namely: Barry Dickens (co-opted non-voting Parish Councillor) and Jane Langford (co-opted non-voting Parish Councillor). That two substitute non-voting co-opted Parish/Town Councillors be appointed to the Governance and Ethics Committee namely Lourdes Cottam and Roger Hunneman.
11. Agrees that the appointment of two non-voting co-opted Parish/Town Councillors is made to the Governance and Ethics Committee's Advisory Panel namely Tony Renouf and Simon Pike. That two substitute non-voting co-opted Parish/Town Councillors be appointed to the Governance and Ethics Committee's Advisory Panel namely Elizabeth O' Keefe and David Southgate.
12. To re-appoint three Independent Persons namely Lindsey Appleton, James Rees and Mike Wall.
13. To note the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board as set out in paragraph 9.1 of Appendix B.
14. That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make any changes required to the Constitution as a result of the changes to the number of Members of the Council and following the appointments to Committees."

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that he believed reducing the number of Members on individual committees was a mistake. Councillor Bridgman commented that a lot of work and thought had gone into the preparation of this document and it was felt to be prudent

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to reduce the number of seats on committees, where appropriate, to reflect the decrease in the number of Members on the Council post the Boundary Review.

Councillor Doherty commented that the reduced numbers on committees would hopefully free members up to have more time to engage with their residents.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

### 12. **Adjournment of the Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the meeting of Council be adjourned to enable the various Committees to determine their Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.

*The meeting was adjourned at 8.39pm.*

### 13. **Recommencement of the Meeting**

*The meeting was reconvened at 8.56pm.*

### 14. **Appointments to Outside Bodies (C3685)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 13) concerning West Berkshire Council's nominations to the following outside bodies:

- Royal Berkshire Fire Authority
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel
- Local Government Association General Assembly

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Lynne Doherty and seconded by Councillor Graham Bridgman:

"That the Council agree the following representatives for the 2019/20 Municipal Year:

- Royal Berkshire Fire Authority – Councillors Dennis Benneyworth (Conservative), Garth Simpson (Conservative), Tony Linden (Conservative), Jeff Brooks (Liberal Democrat)
- Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel - Councillor Howard Woollaston (Conservative)
- Local Government Association General Assembly - Lynne Doherty (Conservative), Graham Bridgman (Conservative), Dominic Boeck (Conservative), James Cole (Conservative)"

Councillor Carlyne Culver stated that Councillor Steve Masters had expressed an interest in being appointed to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority and she therefore proposed that the nominations be amended to reflect this. This proposal was seconded by Councillor David Marsh.

The Monitoring Officer explained that in allocating seats the Council had to give effect to the requirements for political balance as prescribed by section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The legislation required that not all seats be allocated to the same group and that the majority of seats had to be allocated to the majority group. Therefore three seats would need to be allocated to the Conservative Group. The legislation also said that the total number of seats had to be allocated to political groups in the same proportion as their representation on the Council and therefore the remaining seat would have to be allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group.

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Therefore the proposal made by Councillor Culver could not be agreed as it would be ultra vires.

Councillor Jeff Brooks proposed that Councillor Lee Dillon be appointed to the Local Government Association General Assembly. Councillor Graham Bridgman stated that this was not something that had been discussed but that he would be willing to support that change. Councillor Doherty stated that she would be happy to support the appointment of Councillor Dillon and that he would replace Councillor James Cole.

### **RESOLVED that:**

1. Councillors Dennis Benneyworth, Garth Simpson, Tony Linden and Jeff Brooks be appointed to the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority;
2. Councillor Howard Woollaston be appointed to the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel;
3. Councillors Lynne Doherty, Graham Bridgman, Dominic Boeck and Lee Dillon be appointed to the Local Government Association General Assembly.

### **15. West Berkshire Council Strategy: 2019 to 2023 (C3618)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 14) which sought to inform Members of the feedback received from the consultation on the Draft Council Strategy 2019 – 2023 and sought that the Strategy, amended in response to the consultation feedback, be adopted.

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Lynne Doherty and seconded by Councillor Hilary Cole:

That the Council:

- “(1) notes the feedback received to the draft Council Strategy.
- (2) agrees that in response to the feedback received:
  - (a) To develop a "Delivery Plan" to support the Council Strategy 2019 – 2023.
  - (b) to include a number of textual changes to aid clarity and a small number of format changes.
- (3) adopts the West Berkshire Council Strategy for 2019 – 2023 subject to the changes identified within the report.”

Councillor Doherty asked the Council to adopt the strategy which built on the Council's strengths and past achievements. Councillor David Marsh commented that he could not support the Strategy because it did not address the climate change crisis adequately. He believed that the Strategy should reflect the new Council which would have different priorities.

Councillor Lee Dillon stated that in his opinion the Strategy lacked ambition and did not set out clearly for residents what the Council would be doing over the next five years.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stated that this document had been written prior to the elections and that new Members had not had any input into it. There was a new Council with a new Leader in place and therefore an opportunity to revise the Strategy. Councillor Tony Vickers felt that the document was too generic and did not reflect the needs of West Berkshire.

Councillor Steve Masters stated that he would like to see more focus on looking after the most vulnerable, transport and protecting the environment in the strategy and he could therefore not support it.

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Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter stated that he too supported initiatives designed to reduce environmental impact. The Council had invested in a number of initiatives over the past 11 years to that effect but accepted that there was always more that could be done. However these initiatives would cost money and had to be balanced against other priorities and the impact on Council Tax.

Councillor Erik Pattenden stated that the information around improving outcomes for children was vague and set out high level points but not any targets.

Councillor Dominic Boeck reiterated that this was a strategy and the strategy was designed to allow the Council to prioritise its activities. The strategy was designed to give Officers guidance in order for them to make operational decisions.

Councillor Rick Jones was concerned that Members were confusing a strategy, which was designed to give direction, with a plan which would set out what the Council would do in order to implement that strategy. The Council produced a number of strategies which were designed to give direction and these were usually underpinned by a plan which set out the delivery mechanism.

Councillor Hilary Cole commented that Members were failing to grasp that this was a high level document which would be supported by plans and governing groups to develop and deliver those plans. She noted that only 156 responses were received during the consultation which equated to responses from 0.1% of the District's population.

Councillor Lynne Doherty stated that she was disappointed at the lack of support shown for the strategy. It was important that all parties worked together in the best interests of their residents. Members would need to come together to build on the good work the Council was already doing. She stated that the Administration were not complacent and certainly did not lack ambition. She asked Members to understand that as per the recommendations the Council would be developing a Delivery Plan to support the Strategy.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

### 16. **Monitoring Officer's Annual Report to the Governance and Ethics Committee - 2018/19 Year End (C3424)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 15) which provided an update on local and national issues relating to ethical standards and brought to the attention of Members any complaints or other problems within West Berkshire.

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Howard Woollaston and seconded by Councillor Lynne Doherty:

That the Council:

“notes the content of the report

agrees that that the report be circulated to all Parish/Town Councils in the District for information”

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

### 17. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission had met on 09 April 2019.



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**18. Licensing Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Licensing Committee had not met.

**19. District Planning Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the District Planning Committee had met on 17 April 2019.

**20. Governance and Ethics Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Governance and Ethics Committee had met on 15 April 2019.

**21. Personnel Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Personnel Committee had met on the 15 April 2019.

**22. Joint Public Protection Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Joint Public Protection Committee had not met.

*(The meeting commenced at 7.31 pm and closed at 9.15 pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

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