

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

TUESDAY, 2 JULY 2019

Councillors Present: Adrian Abbs, Steve Ardagh-Walter, Peter Argyle, Phil Barnett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Jeff Brooks, Jeff Cant, Hilary Cole, James Cole, Jeremy Cottam, Carolyne Culver, Lee Dillon, Lynne Doherty, Billy Drummond, Clive Hooker (Vice-Chairman), Gareth Hurley, Owen Jeffery, Rick Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Royce Longton, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro, Thomas Marino, David Marsh, Steve Masters, Geoff Mayes, Andy Moore, Graham Pask (Chairman), Erik Pattenden, Claire Rowles, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart, Martha Vickers, Tony Vickers, Andrew Williamson and Keith Woodhams

Also Present: John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Sarah Clarke (Head of Legal and Strategic Support), Martin Dunscombe (Communications Manager), Tess Ethelston (Group Executive (Cons)), Olivia Lewis (Group Executive (Lib Dem)), Ian Pearson (Head of Education Service), Shiraz Sheikh (Principal Solicitor), Stephen Chard (Principal Policy Officer) and Jo Watt (Member Services Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Nassar Kessell and Councillor Howard Woollaston

PART I

25. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Clive Hooker, had attended a number of events since the last Council meeting. Highlights included the Roc10K race in Newbury, a Citizenship Ceremony, the RAF Welford D-Day 75th Anniversary Commemoration and the Lord Lieutenant 'at home'. The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chairman for his assistance.

26. Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 5 March 2019, 21 May 2019, the Special meeting on the 21 May 2019 and the Special meeting on the 30 May 2019 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to a correction which should be noted in respect of a typographical error which appeared on page 174 of the full agenda pack of the 5 March 2019 Council meeting. The private hire operator fee (for 5-9 vehicles) should have read £892 and not £298 as shown in the papers.

27. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Keith Woodhams declared an interest in Agenda Item 15a (by virtue of the fact that his wife worked for the Regency Park Hotel, Thatcham) and reported that, as his interest was a personal interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Gareth Hurley declared an interest in Agenda Item 15d (by virtue of the fact that he worked for Network Rail) and reported that, as his interest was a personal interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

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28. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the meeting.

29. **Public Questions**

There were no public questions received.

30. **Membership of Committees**

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Lee Dillon and seconded by Councillor Jeff Brooks:

That the Council:

“agrees that Councillor Dillon would replace Councillor Nassar Kessell as a substitute on the Governance and Ethics Committee.”

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

31. **Licensing Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Licensing Committee had met on 24 June 2019.

32. **Personnel Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Personnel Committee had met on 28 June 2019.

33. **Governance and Ethics Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Governance and Ethics Committee had met on 17 June 2019.

34. **District Planning Committee**

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

35. **Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission had not met.

36. **Joint Public Protection Committee**

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Joint Public Protection Committee had met on 11 June 2019.

37. **Revised Statement of Community Involvement for the Local Plan (C3750)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 14) which sought approval of the draft updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for public consultation.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Hilary Cole and seconded by Councillor Alan Law:

That the Council resolves:

“to approve the draft updated SCI for public consultation”.

Councillor Hilary Cole outlined the report and stated that the SCI set out the policy for involving the community in the plan making process and the consideration of planning applications within the district. Councillor Hilary Cole explained that in accordance with

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the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2017, the SCI must be reviewed every five years. As the current SCI was published in September 2014, a review was now required.

Council noted that the current SCI worked well. Therefore, only minor changes would be necessary as a result of the review, mainly to take into account changes in legislation and national planning policies, and some other factual updates. A revised draft SCI (June 2019) was attached at Appendix D to the report.

Councillor Hilary Cole reported that the Council's approach to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had not changed; it was now set out in the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document. In addition, as the Council now offered a pre-application advice service for all planning applications, it was no longer necessary to have a separate section in the SCI on significant applications.

The consultation period for the review would take place over six weeks from 12th July to 23rd August 2019. The revised SCI, post taking account of consultation responses, would then be considered by Council in December 2019.

Councillor Tony Linden reported that the revised draft SCI (Appendix D) referred to Wokingham District Council rather than the correct title of Wokingham Borough Council. Councillor Alan Macro highlighted other inaccuracies and a proof read was necessary prior to the commencement of consultation.

Councillor Macro said that given that not all residents had access to the internet, planning documents should be available in libraries in hard copy for the public. Councillor Graham Bridgman made the point that internet access was available to members of the public in libraries rather than needing hard copies.

Councillor Tony Vickers said that he was happy to support the consultation. However, Councillor Vickers said he regretted some of the changes that had taken place since the last review which meant that not all documentation relevant to planning applications was available on the website.

(Councillor Billy Drummond joined the meeting at 7.15pm).

Councillor Vickers asked Sarah Clarke, Monitoring Officer, to comment on the changes that had taken place. Sarah Clarke stated that whilst she did not have the necessary information to hand, her understanding was that the Council was fully compliant with its duties to publish planning application information. Sarah Clarke offered to follow this up outside of the meeting if needed.

Councillor Alan Law said that he fully supported the proposal to approve the draft updated SCI for public consultation. Councillor Law went on to suggest that the valid points raised by his fellow Councillors should be fed into the consultation process. On the matter of documentation published or not on the website, he felt that specific examples should be provided to Officers to investigate further.

Councillor Hilary Cole gave thanks for the comments received. She concluded by saying that the decision to not include planning documents in libraries, provide hard copies to parishes and other similar changes had been taken as part of a saving presented to and agreed by Council in 2017.

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

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38. Notice of Motions

(a) Notice of Motion - Motion on Road & Pedestrian Safety Issues Bowling Green Road Thatcham

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 15a refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Keith Woodhams relating to road and pedestrian safety issues on Bowling Green Road in Thatcham.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Motion would not be debated at the meeting. In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.9.8. it would be referred to the Executive for consideration as this motion was an Executive function.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Keith Woodhams and seconded by Councillor Jeff Brooks.

“The Council is aware that the stretch of road known as Bowling Green Road from Northfield Road to the start of Tull Way acts as a significant part of the northern road system in Thatcham, linking Floral Way with Tull Way. As such, the road is used by people to get to and from Newbury and other parts of Thatcham from both east and west as well as from Ashmore Green and Cold Ash.

Along this stretch of road, three housing areas are accessed via Mersey Way, Conway Drive and Thames Road.

Among a wide range of issues are the following:

- The 30 mph speed limit is exceeded daily by numerous drivers.
- Drivers exiting junctions from the three housing areas encounter vehicles coming towards them at high speed.
- A 30 mph sign on the western approach is normally covered in foliage rendering the speed limit along the road unenforceable.
- Foliage extends towards the road at various points contributing to poor sight lines at junctions.
- Foliage narrows the footway at various points forcing pedestrians to walk closer to the edge of the pavement and thus closer to fast moving vehicles including HGVs.
- Regency Park Hotel staff & visitors cross the road to get to the facilities between fast moving vehicles, including HGVs.
- Pupils disembarking from the school bus and crossing the road between fast moving vehicles including HGVs.

Given these significant issues:

This Council agrees to carry out an urgent and comprehensive review of Road and Pedestrian safety issues along this stretch of Bowling Green Road.”

(b) Notice of Motion - Motion on Governance Issues

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 15b refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon relating to governance issues.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Motion would not be debated at the meeting. In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.9.8. it would be referred to the task group, set up by the Governance and Ethics Committee, considering amendments to the Constitution.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Lee Dillon and seconded by Councillor Jeff Brooks

“This Council notes:

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1. That more public questions are being asked at both Executive and Full Council meetings.
2. That the current time limit of 30 minutes results in some questions not being answered during the meeting they are tabled for.
3. Public participation is important to a healthy local democracy and the Council should welcome public questions.
4. That petitions are an important tool for local campaigners to highlight issues.
5. That some petitions have requests for multiple actions but current rules only allow for full acceptance, rejection, or investigation by Full Council and the Executive rather than being able to accept certain actions within the petition.

Therefore Council resolves to:

1. Increase public question time at Full Council and Executive meetings to 45 minutes.
2. Increase time for petitions to be debated as follows:
300- 500 signatures – 10 minute debate
500 – 1000 signatures – 30 minute debate
Over 1000 signatures – minimum of 45 minutes but final debate time to be agreed by all group leaders.
3. Allow Council or Executive to accept individual items within a petition without needing to accept all points, so that where we can take action we do.”

(c) **Notice of Motions - Motion to Declare a Climate Emergency**

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 15c refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter relating to the declaration of a climate emergency.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Motion would be debated at the meeting.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter and seconded by Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“This Council notes that:

1. All levels of government (national, regional and local) have a responsibility to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown. It is important for the residents of West Berkshire and the UK that we commit to working towards carbon neutrality as quickly as possible.
2. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be of the utmost urgency.
3. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved health and wellbeing) but will also require changes in individuals’ lifestyles and have a cost implication to both the individual and the state.

West Berkshire Council therefore:

1. Declares a Climate Emergency.
2. Will create a strategic plan for West Berkshire, that aims to deliver carbon neutral by 2030.
3. Calls on HM Government to provide the Council with the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible.
4. Will work with other authorities to determine and implement where practicable best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C.

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5. Will continue to work with businesses, residents and other stakeholders across the district to deliver this new goal via all relevant strategies and plans.
6. The newly formed Environment Board will provide an interim report to the Executive in September 2019 with the progress made to date.

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

(d) **Notice of Motion - Motion on Heathrow Airport Expansion**

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 15d refers) submitted in the name of Councillor David Marsh relating to Heathrow Airport Expansion.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Motion would not be debated at the meeting. In accordance with Procedure Rule 4.9.8, it would be referred to Transport Advisory Group for consideration. It would then return to Council at its meeting on the 12th September 2019 for further consideration.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor David Marsh and seconded by Councillor Carolyne Culver:

“This Council notes:

The Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation opened on 18th June and closes on 13th September 2019. The next full Council meeting is not until the evening before the consultation closes. In July 2018, Full Council voted to support Heathrow expansion. In July 2018, the former Council Leader wrote to Richard Benyon MP outlining the Council’s support for Heathrow expansion.

This Council believes:

Support for Heathrow expansion is incompatible with tackling the climate emergency and the UK becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

The Heathrow Western Rail Link is welcome because it will take more cars off the road, thereby reducing congestion and air pollution.

This Council resolves:

To oppose Heathrow expansion.

To make a submission to the Heathrow Airport Expansion Consultation to express its opposition to Heathrow expansion.

To write to Richard Benyon MP to express its opposition to Heathrow expansion.

To maintain its support for the Heathrow Western Rail Link.

39. **Members' Questions**

- (a) A question standing in the name of Councillor Steve Masters on the subject of investment in rural bus services would receive a written response from the Executive Member for Transport and Countryside.
- (b) A question standing in the name of Councillor Steve Masters on the subject of investment in cycling infrastructure would receive a written response from the Executive Member for Transport and Countryside.
- (c) A question standing in the name of Councillor Steve Masters on the subject of redevelopment of Newbury Town Centre would receive a written response from the Executive Member for Economic Development and Planning.

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- (d) A question standing in the name of Councillor Steve Masters on the subject of collection of CIL levies on non-commercial developments would receive a written response from the Executive Member for Economic Development and Planning.
- (e) A question standing in the name of Councillor Steve Masters on the subject of the Council's response to a consultation on CIL processes would receive a written response from the Executive Member for Economic Development and Planning.

(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.35pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature