

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2021

Members of the Executive present: Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter, Councillor Graham Bridgman, Councillor Hilary Cole, Councillor Lynne Doherty, Councillor Ross Mackinnon, Councillor Richard Somner, Councillor Joanne Stewart and Councillor Howard Woollaston.

Also in attendance were: Councillor Carlyne Culver, Councillor Andy Moore, Councillor Erik Pattenden and Councillor Tony Vickers.

Councillors present remotely: Councillor Dominic Boeck, Councillor Jeff Brooks, Councillor Lee Dillon, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor David Marsh and Councillor Steve Masters.

Also Present: Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director - Resources), Andy Sharp (Executive Director - People), Eric Owens (Service Director - Development & Regulation), Shiraz Sheikh (Service Lead - Legal and Democratic), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Vicki Yull (Principal Democratic Services Officer) and Jack Karimi (Democratic Services Officer).

PART I

42. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

43. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Richard Somner declared an interest in Agenda Item 9 (Contract Award for the Drug and Alcohol Behaviour Change Service) by virtue of the fact that he is an NHS employee of provider services, but reported that, as his interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate.

44. Public Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#)

- a) A question standing in the name of Mr John Gotelee on the subject of reinstating the football pitch and clubhouse at the LRIE was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- b) A question standing in the name of Mr Graham Storey on the subject of the Council's position on funding and building homes for social rent was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation.
- c) A question standing in the name of Mr Simon Pike on the subject of the Council's plans to update its 'Supplementary Planning Document: Part 5 – External Lighting' was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- d) A question standing in the name of Ms Alison May on the subject of addressing the challenges caused by violence against women participating in politics was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection / Adult Social Care.

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- e) A question standing in the name of Mr Darius Zarazel on behalf of Newbury Town Council on the subject of a final public consultation on the Monks Lane Sports Hub application would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.
- f) A question standing in the name of Mr Vaughan Miller on the subject of the removal of the high protective net preventing balls from being kicked into the Kennet was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- g) A question standing in the name of Mr Paul Morgan on the subject of the Council's intention to borrow funds from the Public Works Loan Board for the Monks Lane Sport Hub proposal was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.
- h) A question standing in the name of Mr John Gotelee on the subject of development on the Faraday Road football pitch was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.
- i) A question standing in the name of Mr Graham Storey on the subject of applications to the new Housing Register and the Council's social housing policy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Strategic Partnerships and Transformation.
- j) A question standing in the name of Mr Simon Pike on the subject of recommendations of the Institute of Lighting Professionals on environmental zones for exterior lighting control was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- k) A question standing in the name of Mr Vaughan Miller on the subject of the total costs of the preparation of Faraday Road Football Ground to be reopened as a recreation pitch was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

45. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

46. **Environment Strategy Progress Report (EX4121)**

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter summarised the report (Agenda item 6) which presented the first Annual Progress Report for the Environment Strategy, specifically covering the period from the approval of the Strategy in July 2020 through to July 2021. The report also demonstrated how the Council had listened to feedback received throughout the year, provided an update on the Council's carbon footprint, and reported on the carbon emission data for the District.

Councillor Ardagh-Walter highlighted some of the actions delivered over the last twelve months in line with the strategy, with the activities having covered carbon neutrality, improving the natural and physical health of people and wildlife, as well as ensuring economic growth is environmentally responsible. Councillor Ardagh-Walter referred to the work still to do on the strategy and the part that everyone in the district can play in getting to carbon neutral. Councillor Ardagh-Walter also confirmed that the delivery team had recently appointed three new officers which had increased its capacity to deliver projects.

Councillor Lee Dillon spoke on behalf of Councillor Adrian Abbs who was not present. Firstly, Councillor Dillon noted Section 4.4 of the report, which stated a 16% reduction in carbon footprint, which he believed presented a false picture of hope. He referred to the Council Motion to make West Berkshire carbon neutral by 2030, and argued that

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percentages across the district needed to be understood first to then work out what that percentage is as a result of the Council's activities. Secondly, Councillor Dillon asked whether a visual representation could be provided of the carbon impact of each project, in addition to the financial details of the £12.5 million allocated for environmental projects. Finally, Councillor Dillon noted that Grazeley is big enough for 60 megawatts but the report stated only 10 megawatts was envisaged. He suggested that the Council's level of ambition should be set higher. Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded by confirming that the Council was responsible for around 1% of emissions in the district and that it is far easier to measure what the Council was doing to reduce its carbon footprint than look at the district as a whole. The data for the district produced at a national level infers overall trends, and there has been a pronounced downward trend in carbon levels. He also confirmed that the Council is on track and has credible plans for achieving carbon neutrality, but that he did not think the government target of 2050 for the decarbonisation of the UK economy would be achievable given current lifestyles. Councillor Ardagh-Walter then advised that the carbon impact of the Council's programmes are expected to be produced shortly by the consultants commissioned for the project, and that this could be shared once available. Finally, he agreed that Grazeley could be bigger, and that the matter is being driven by officers' advice and the specialist engineers working on designing the scheme. He believed that, collectively, members would have another opportunity to consider the plans for this.

Councillor Dillon queried whether the possibility and costs of the Council commissioning its own data study, rather than relying on national benchmarking data, had been investigated. Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that he did not believe it would be possible to provide a more accurate picture of consumption than already done by academics given the complexity of the subject. He referred to the body of data recently produced by Leeds University which had proved to be an excellent resource, and stated that he felt that replicating this locally would not prove to be an efficient use of the Council's resources.

Councillor Carolyne Culver commended the work done by officers on this and queried whether parish involvement in the Climate Forum had been increased since September given the importance of getting them involved and the quick wins that could be achieved once they are involved. Councillor Culver also asked about the liaison with large landowners in West Berkshire, noting that some of her constituents were unaware of ways to get involved with the scheme. Councillor Culver also asked whether the Council is helping to address the energy performance at schools it has an influence over, and the quick wins to be achieved if the Council persuaded the Berkshire Pension Fund to go carbon neutral. Finally, Councillor Culver highlighted how councillors could be used as ambassadors by raising awareness with the public via things like Facebook groups and parish newsletters. Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that the latest figures on parish involvement would have to be checked but that he does want to increase this. He also advised that at last one landowner was involved at a fairly early stage on one project, and that more will be brought in. He noted that at last sixteen schools are in the eco-schools programme which is a great vehicle for enthusing children, and agreed that heating schools is difficult but that officers are aware of the issue. With regards to the Berkshire Pension Fund, Councillor Ardagh-Walter noted that its investment policy had been updated recently so that only energy companies with credible plans to transition away from carbon will be invested in. Finally, he agreed that councillors could be used as ambassadors and said he would encourage the team to look at member training.

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Councillor Tony Vickers commended the work done by officers on this and referred to what he saw as missed opportunities to include solar panels during the build of community assets. Councillor Vickers mentioned the pilot on-street electric vehicle charging points but noted that he had not seen an advert for the TPO to make them used for the purpose they were built. Councillor Vickers also referred to the big community switch and stated it was not clear if this was saving resident's money, and queried if it was switching to greener energy and not just cheaper energy. Finally, Councillor Vickers commented that it seemed that the general public were more enthusiastic about the climate crisis than the Council, with the exception of dedicated officers. Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter responded that there were always complications with solar panels but that it was an ongoing rolling programme with more being built in the coming year. Councillor Ardagh-Walter advised that a consultation regarding the charging points would be undertaken shortly, and of the need to establish demand for power points from that survey. Finally, he advised that only green tariffs had been included in the Big Community Switch and that it had helped to financially motivate switching and decarbonise the district.

Councillor Alan Macro queried what was being done in the interim to get new housing to be carbon neutral as soon as possible given the local plan review was put on hold. Councillor Macro then queried why the Council is not sourcing its asphalt from a local supplier in Theale. Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that he agreed with the aspiration to improve the building regulations but could not comment in detail on the asphalt supplier beyond stating his belief that the sub-contractors have clearly committed to carbon neutrality.

Councillor Erik Pattenden referred to the 16% reduction in carbon emissions over the last two years for the Council, and the 1% reduction across the district, and asked whether the Council is where it wanted to be at this point, noting the 23.6% reduction achieved by Newbury Town Council. Councillor Pattenden then queried whether a simple to read document showing progress in a graph or chart form could be provided. Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded that he had a good level of confidence that the Council will achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, given the projects that would drive it towards this target, but that comparisons to Newbury Town Council were not useful due to the difference in scale between the two councils' operations. Councillor Ardagh-Walter agreed with the need for a progress indicator in the form of a visual dashboard, and confirmed that work is ongoing to implement one.

Councillor Steve Masters asked the Portfolio Holder if he believed infinite growth on a finite planet is possible, and suggested that not all aspects of modern life have to be removed to achieve carbon neutrality. He questioned if the Council is doing everything possible to achieve its target, or if it was placing responsibility on to individuals instead, and also whether anyone was contacting businesses on this matter. Councillor Ardagh-Walter responded to say he could not comment on infinite growth, but that it is about balancing decarbonisation along with better health and wellbeing, improving the ecological environment, maintaining a level of prosperity and making sure growth is zero carbon to drive down the overall footprint. The council needs to take a lead on delivering projects which enable others to do their part. He invited councillors to spread the message that the biggest change will come from people and their choices and market forces.

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Councillor Lynne Doherty commended the work done by officers and the Portfolio Holder on this and noted the positive impact and delivery against actions arising from the Council having declared a climate emergency.

Councillor Richard Somner also commended the work done by officers and noted that the report and its initiatives demonstrated a great boost to the ongoing programme of work that the Council was doing. It also evidenced a great amount of collaborative work, and engagement and partnerships that were essential. Councillor Somner responded to Councillor Tony Vickers that electric charging points were advertised online, but that he would pick up on this point and make sure that the information was made available.

RESOLVED to: Approve the Annual Progress Report on the Environment Strategy (as included at Appendix C to the report) for publication on the Council's website.

Other options considered: There is a commitment to report on an annual basis on progress delivering the Environment Strategy. Future reporting periods could be from first approval of the Environment Strategy (July 2020) or it could be aligned to the financial year for future reporting years which is how much of the Council's reporting is structured. Discussions around this can be had at Environment Board.

47. Hackney Carriage Tariffs (EX4140)

Councillor Hilary Cole presented the report (Agenda item 7) which provided feedback on the statutory consultation in relation to the hackney carriage table of fares, and invited the Committee to determine whether or not to modify the hackney carriage fare scale (following the Delegated Officer Decision on 8 September 2021 to vary the current fare scale by an increase of 5%) in light of the objection received and not withdrawn during the consultation period.

Councillor Cole explained how the Delegated Officer Decision had been advertised, with the subsequent objection considered by the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 8 November 2021. Cllr Cole advised the Committee of her support for the recommendations of the Licensing Committee that the revised table of fares come into operation on the 19 November 2021 and noted that drivers have the option to increase fares by 5% should they choose to do so.

Councillor Richard Somner asked for clarification that the decision affected all taxi provision within the District. Councillor Cole responded that her understanding was that hackney carriages are vehicles that can be flagged down on the road whereas private hire taxis (are vehicles booked in advance. Councillor Graham Bridgman added that this was correct and that it applies only to hackney carriage vehicles.

Councillor Lee Dillon noted that this matter had already been considered and endorsed by the Licensing Committee, and stated the importance of recognising that it's a maximum increase being proposed. Councillor Dillon referred to increased living costs and the need for fares to keep in line with inflation to ensure that drivers make a decent wage, and also the importance of supporting the taxi industry in the district. Councillor Cole indicated her agreement and expressed her gratitude to officers and the Licensing Committee for their work on this matter.

Councillor Graham Bridgman expressed his support of building positive relationships with the taxi trade across the District and stated that the new fare structure was much simpler to understand in comparison to the former tariffs, enabling it to be revisited more often (in conjunction with the trade) to keep account of inflation.

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RESOLVED that:

- a) The objection received during the statutory consultation be considered and noted.
- b) No modifications be made to the table of fares at Appendix D having taken into account the objection.
- c) The 19 November 2021 be confirmed as the date that the table of fares, without modification, comes into effect.

Other options considered: **Other options, such as not introducing an increase or varying the table of fares by circa 10%, have been considered at earlier stages in the process and rejected. However, the specifics of any modification now to the table of fares set at Appendix D, are for the Executive to determine, taking into account all the information referred to in the report and Appendices. The only decisions that can be taken now are as outlined in the report. There are no restrictions or limitations on when or how often the Council reviews the table of fares after decisions to be made on 18 November 2021. Future changes by way of decrease or increase to fares, or amendments to the tariff model or method of calculation of fares, can take place at the Council's discretion in line with the process under s.65 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.**

48. **Social Value Policy (EX4153)**

Councillor Ross Mackinnon presented the report (Agenda item 8) which sought approval for the adoption of the West Berkshire Social Value Policy which formalises the approach to implementing Social Value in the District in line with the 2012 Public Services (Social Value) Act.

Councillor Mackinnon explained how the new policy seeks to secure social, environmental and economic benefits to the District at the pre-procurement stage of the awarding of all public services contracts by West Berkshire Council. Councillor Mackinnon referred to the relatively new government procurement policy statement that requires public bodies to consider social value issues, and the Council has defined its own to include: focussing on creating jobs for young people; apprenticeships; using local suppliers in the supply chain, and; encouraging smaller suppliers. Councillor Mackinnon also highlighted that the proposal is to introduce a weighting of up to 10% in the scoring of bids under the tendering process for these social value aspects, with exceptional cases potentially going above that level. Councillor Mackinnon finished by paying tribute to work of the Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Lee Dillon noted that social values and sustainability are typically standard considerations within procurement now, and that the proposed scoring mechanism followed a well-defined procurement template and style. Councillor Dillon then queried the membership of the Task and Finish Group, and requested an example of potential circumstances where using a social value score would not be appropriate. Councillor Mackinnon responded by confirming that the membership was as set out in the report in the 'consultation and engagement' section, and that as this is intended for wide usage he could not think of a situation in which social value would not be considered.

Councillor Alan Macro queried whether the sample questions set out in the report could be expanded to include matters such as carbon emissions and recycling. Councillor Mackinnon responded to confirm that the sample questions were not an exhaustive list of all the questions asked, and his certainty that these matters are considered.

Councillor Jeff Brooks highlighted that the Task and Finish Group did not have a Liberal Democrat member, and suggested that the tender process could also include a request

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for potential suppliers to demonstrate financially how they will invest locally. Councillor Mackinnon responded that he didn't see an issue with this in principle, and acknowledged that contributions can also be more than financial as well. On the composition of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Mackinnon noted that the Liberal Democrats were approached to nominate a member.

Councillor Woollaston noted that the report was uncontroversial and had cross-party support.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The adoption of the West Berkshire Council Social Value Policy be approved.
- b) Delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director - Resources to agree minor changes to the adopted Social Value Policy.

Other options considered: Do nothing. This is not an option. Consideration of social value in procurements over the Find a Tender (FTS – formerly OJEU) levels is now mandatory. Public authorities are recommended to consider Social Value in all procurements where it is possible to do so. The Council does already take account of Social Value principles in procurement and contract management; this policy sets out a formal framework by which Social Value should be implemented in all future procurements.

49. Contract Award for the Drug and Alcohol Behaviour Change Service (EX4112)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda item 9) which proposed to award the contract for the supply/provision of the Drug and Alcohol Behaviour Change Service following a tender process.

Councillor Graham Bridgman highlighted three elements of the proposed contract: the savings to the Council along with the improved service offer to those in need of it; the extended hours the new contract will provide, and; the improved scope for the transition between children and adults in need of the service.

Recommendations (Vote to be taken in Part 2):

- 1) To award the contract for Drug and Alcohol Behaviour Change Service to the successful bidder.
- 2) To delegate authority to the Service Lead Legal & Democratic Services to finalise the terms of the agreement as set out in the tender documents and to make any necessary drafting or other amendments to the terms of the agreement which are necessary to reach final agreement but do not materially affect the intent and substance of the agreement.

Other options considered: Permission to go out to tender was sought from Procurement Board. The procurement options were set out in the procurement strategy.

50. Members' Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#)

- a) A question standing in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of the Council testing the applicability of CS15 as a tool to address climate change would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.

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- b) A question standing in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks on the subject of the cancellation of CIL charges levied to residents was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- c) A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon on the subject of highways signs across the District was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- d) A question standing in the name of Councillor Tony Vickers on the subject of the allocation of a parking space for a Car Club car at the Newbury Racecourse housing development was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- e) A question standing in the name of Councillor Tony Vickers on the subject of the number of vehicles being provided for the Newbury Car Club contract was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- f) A question standing in the name of Councillor Andy Moore on the subject of potential changes to the use of the multi-storey car park behind the West Berkshire Council Market Street offices in light of post-Covid changes was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- g) A question standing in the name of Councillor Erik Pattenden on the subject of the provision of food vouchers over the October half term was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Education.
- h) A question standing in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of the application for lawful occupation recently passed in Lambourn would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- i) A question standing in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks on the subject of when the consultation will take place with regards to the speed limit reduction on the A4 from Henwick Lane to Lower Way was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- j) A question standing in the name of Councillor Tony Vickers on the subject of who is responsible for providing facilities for long-distance HGV drivers was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- k) A question standing in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of alternative locations considered for the proposed Sports Hub would receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance, Leisure and Culture.
- l) A question standing in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks on the subject of waiving fees for street closures during the Jubilee Lunch on 5 June 2022 was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture.

51. **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 Paragraphs(s) * 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 8.10.4 of the Constitution](#) also refers.

52. **Contract Award for the Drug and Alcohol Behaviour Change Service (EX4112)**

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

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The Executive considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 12) concerning the award of the contract for the supply / provision of a Drug and Alcohol Behaviour Change Service following a tender process. The report proposed (1) the award of the contract to the successful bidder and (2) delegating authority to the Service Lead, Legal and Democratic Services to finalise the terms of the agreement.

RESOLVED that the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 7.05 pm)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. D.', is centered on a white rectangular background.

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

16 December 2021