

DRAFT

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

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 16 MARCH 2023

Councillors Present: Rick Jones (Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Steve Ardagh-Walter, Phil Barnett, Jeff Beck, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Jeff Brooks, Hilary Cole, James Cole, Jeremy Cottam, Carlyne Culver, Lynne Doherty, Clive Hooker, Gareth Hurley, Owen Jeffery, Tony Linden, Ross Mackinnon, Thomas Marino, David Marsh, Steve Masters, Geoff Mayes, Andy Moore, Biyi Oloko, Graham Pask, Erik Pattenden, Claire Rowles, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Joanne Stewart, Martha Vickers, Andrew Williamson and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director for Resources), Paul Coe (Executive Director for People), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director for Place). Sarah Clarke (Service Director, Strategy and Governance and Monitoring Officer), Nicola Thomas (Service Lead, Legal and Democratic Services), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager) and David Cook (Principal Democratic Services Officer). Honorary Aldermen Quentin Webb, Andrew Rowles and Paul Bryant.

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Alan Law, Councillor Jeff Cant, Councillor Lee Dillon, Councillor Billy Drummond, Councillor Nassar Hunt, Councillor Royce Longton, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor Tony Vickers and Councillor Keith Woodhams.

PART I

1. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman reported that he or the Vice-Chairman or other Members on their behalf had attended 21 events since the last Council meeting in December 2022. He thanked Councillors Clive Hooker, Graham Pask and Alan Law for standing in for him when he was not able to attend events.

There were events such as carol singing that were attended in December, highly valued citizen events and he made reference to the Community Champion Awards that recognised outstanding community contribution by individuals and groups. He mentioned that at the Lord Lieutenant's awards volunteers from Wash Common and Tilehurst were represented. There had also been a number of memorial events such as tree planting in memory of our late Queen and rose planting for the passing of a year of the Ukrainian war and the generosity of West Berkshire hosts. He also mentioned the Holocaust Day Memorial and how proud he was to go to Buckingham Palace and greet the King. He mentioned that as this was the last Council meeting prior to the local elections he hoped it could be a cooperative one showing respect for each other.

Councillor Lynne Doherty said that as this was the last Council meeting prior to going into the elections she wanted to take the opportunity, as Councillor Dillon had done at the last meeting, to thank all Members who were stepping down and thank those who were stepping forward to stand at the election. There were a number of long standing Councillors who would be stepping down, including Councillor Royce Longton who unfortunately could not attend this meeting and she echoed the best wishes given to him by his party. She thanked Councillor Garth Simpson who had been a councillor since 2011, been a member of the Executive and committee chairman, she appreciated the support that he had given her. Unfortunately Councillor Law had given his apologies but

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Councillor Doherty highlighted the work he had done as a councillor since being elected in 2007 such as being a Member of Executive to his current role as Vice-Chairman. Councillor Doherty also mentioned Councillor Hilary Cole who had also been elected in 2007 and was a dear friend and mentor. She also had held multiple Executive roles as well as being Vice-Chairman. With regards to Councillor Jeff Beck she mentioned that he had been first elected in 2000 serving 19 years as a councillor with a great sense of duty and worked very hard in his role.

Councillor Doherty thanked Councillor Pask who had been first elected in 1987 and had been a councillor for 36 years, 40 years if you included time as a parish councillor. He had held many roles including being the Conservative Leader and Portfolio Holder. Councillor Pask had also been Chairman on three occasions. She said he had a charismatic personality with lots of integrity and kindness. She appreciated the support he had given her and the work he had done for both residents of Bucklebury and the district as a whole.

Councillor Pask said that it had been a difficult decision not to stand for re-election and that he would miss all councillors, the work of being Chairman, working with planning and meeting a lot of wonderful people and organisations. He was privileged to have represented Bucklebury and thanked the Leader for her kind words. He said it had been a privilege to represent the whole district, he had been Chairman three times meeting many people and as he had already said it had been a difficult decision not to stand again.

Councillor Brooks said that from his side he wanted to wish all retiring members well and the ones named this evening had done a very good job representing residents. He mentioned that in a variety of meetings he had had many tussles with many of the councillors, particular Councillor Law. They had locked horns on many occasions but would be companionable outside the meeting. He thanked Councillor Pask as they had both served a long way back to the days of Newbury District Council. He thanked all those stepping down and particularly Councillor Longton on his side.

2. **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 1 December 2022 and 23 February 2023 were approved as true and correct records and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4. **Petitions**

No petitions were received.

5. **Public Questions**

A full transcription of the public questions and answer session is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As.](#)

It was agreed that a question standing in the name of Kathryn Hodgson would receive a written response, given that she was unable to attend the meeting.

A question standing in the name of Vaughan Miller on the subject of funding for the Community Based Support & Community Building was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing.

A question standing in the name of Paul Morgan on the subject of Corporate Board was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Governance and Strategic Partnerships.

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A question standing in the name of Vaughan Miller on the subject of nine services in the Voluntary Sector Prospectus funding was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing.

A question standing in the name of Paul Morgan on the subject of a question regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

A question standing in the name of Vaughan Miller on the subject of the business case for the sports hub was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Housing Leisure and Culture.

A question standing in the name of Vaughan Miller on the subject of the Playing Pitch Strategy was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture.

6. Membership of Committees

There had been no changes to the membership of Committees since the previous Council meeting.

7. Licensing Committee

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Licensing Committee had met on 23 January 2023.

8. Personnel Committee

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Personnel Committee had met on 9 February 2023 and 21 February 2023.

9. Governance and Ethics Committee

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Governance and Ethics Committee had met on 6 January 2023 and 6 March 2023.

10. District Planning Committee

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

11. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission had met on 7 March 2023.

12. Health Scrutiny Committee

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Health Scrutiny Committee had met on 13 December 2022 and 14 March 2023.

13. Health and Wellbeing Board

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Health and Wellbeing Board had met on 8 December 2022 and 23 February 2023.

14. Joint Public Protection Committee

The Council noted that, since its last ordinary meeting, the Joint Public Protection Committee had met on 26 January 2023 and 13 March 2023.

15. Updates to the Constitution (C4272)

Council considered a report (agenda item 17) regarding the work undertaken by the Constitution Review Task Group and to propose the approval of the proposed Constitutional updates detailed within the report.

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MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Tom Marino and seconded by Councillor Graham Bridgman;

That the Council:

- (a) approves the Budget and Policy Framework, which is attached at Appendix A to this Report;
- (b) approves the Financial Rules, which are attached at Appendix B to this Report;
- (c) approves the Contract Rules, which are attached at Appendix C to this Report;
- (d) notes that the above Rules will replace current Parts of the Constitution, namely:
 - Part 9 – Budget and Policy Framework Rules of Procedure
 - Part 10 – Financial Rules of Procedure
 - Part 11 – Contract Rules of Procedure
- (e) approves the Glossary that is attached at Appendix D to this Report, and delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to keep the Glossary updated;
- (f) approves a requirement that upon receipt of a requisition for an extraordinary meeting of Council, the Chairman of Council will call the meeting within the statutory timeframe and the meeting will normally be held within 30 clear working days;
- (g) notes the final version of the Parts of the Constitution that were previously agreed by Council in October 2022, which are attached at Appendix E to this Report;
- (h) agrees that the changes to the Constitution detailed in this report, take effect from 30th April 2023;
- (i) delegates to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Constitution Review Task Group the power to update Parts 1 and 2 of the Constitution to ensure that this reflects the new rules, and to make any minor additional corrections to the parts of the Constitution to ensure consistency in terminology and presentation;
- (j) delegates to the Monitoring Officer the power to make corrections to the Constitution to reflect organisational restructures.”

Councillor Marino stated that the report provided an update and recommendations from the Constitution Review Task Group. The Task Group had done a thorough review and re-draft of sections of the Constitution and these updates formed part of the recommendations. They had also made proposed changes to the Glossary such as having consistency in phrases throughout the Constitution. The Glossary would continue to be updated as required. He thanked members of the Task Group and supporting officers for all their hard work.

Councillor James Cole said that she had sat on a number of the Task Group meetings and appreciated the hard work they put in, especially Councillor Bridgman and officers. The Joint Public Protection Committee had asked that he mention some changes that were required, these were the quorum being two councillors and not four, it should be able to receive reports on joint arrangements and receive members' questions as well as

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respond to petitions. He asked if the Public Protection Manager could review the relevant part of the Constitution.

Councillor Jeff Brooks explained that he joined the Task Group after its initial set up but had come to appreciate the hard work that they put into it. There had been good cross party working and they had always agreed on proposed changes without having to resort to votes. The Constitution would remain a living document and there would be further changes post-election, whoever was in power. He also thanked officers for their support.

Councillor Bridgman said he recommended that officers review the Joint Public Protection Committee as per the recommendation from Councillor James Cole. He thanked councillors for their comments and members of the Governance and Ethics Committee who had considered the documents. He also thanked officers for their work. He agreed that this was a living document that needed to be kept under constant review.

Councillor Jeff Beck said that he had been a member of the Task Group and he gave thanks to Councillor Bridgman who had led the review as well as other members and officers. This had been an excellent cross party working group.

Councillor Marino concluded the debate and ask the Chairman to move to the vote.

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

16. Member Induction and Development Programme 2023/2024 (C4264)

Council considered a report (agenda item 18) to agree the proposed Member Induction and Development Programme for 2023/24 following the District Council Election in May 2023.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Tom Marino and seconded by Councillor Clive Hooker;

That the Council:

Discuss and, if appropriate, agree the proposed Member Induction and Development Programme for 2023/24.

Authorise the Service Director – Strategy and Governance to regularly review and amend the Programme where necessary throughout the Municipal Year to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose.

Councillor Marino stated that the report asked Council to agree the Member Development Programme for the following Municipal Year, this included training sessions on a number of different matters some of which were mandatory such, as planning training for planning committee members. He implored members to attend as many sessions as possible, especially any new members. The program had been considered by the Member Development Group. The proposed dates and times would be added prior to the election with times to suit members who worked full time and in a hybrid format.

AMENDMENT: Proposed by Councillor Jeff Brooks and seconded by Councillor Jeremy Cottam.

That Council;

“Replace the word ‘mandatory’ with the words ‘strongly recommended’, except where there was a legislative requirement that Members must have been trained in order to sit on a particular body – Planning, Licensing and Appeals refer. Delete the words ‘Dress Code’.”

Councillor Brooks informed that he requested Council replace the word mandatory with strongly recommended except where there was a legislative requirement that members

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be trained to be on a particular body such as licensing. He agreed that there needed to be an induction programme especially for new members. He felt that training did not need to be crammed into a short period of time but spread out so that members were not overwhelmed. The Council could not mandate councillors to undertake any training unless there was a legislative requirement, so to use mandatory for a whole range of training was not appropriate and could not be enforced. He gave assurance that if re-elected his Group Leader and himself would encourage their members to attend training sessions but they would not be forced to do so.

Cllr Brooks also asked that the word dress code be deleted from the programme. He said members did not need training in how to dress by officers. Councillor Steve Masters said that he had taken part in the working group and recalled that the amendments that Councillor Brooks was proposing had been approved. He urged members to support the motion.

Councillor Dominic Boeck said that as far as the dress code element he had some sympathy with Councillor Brooks. When it came to the programme there were elements that he felt everyone should attend such as Corporate Parenting as it was vital that all councillors understood their role as Corporate Parents.

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter said that he had sympathy with the proposed amendment especially as he was a rebel on the tie wearing front. He agreed that members should be allowed to decide how to dress in an appropriate manner. With regards to mandatory training he agreed that there were some that might not need to be classed that way but there were some, such as information security and safeguarding, that if not trained in could lead to reputational damage for the council or worse.

Councillor Tony Linden recalled that many years ago members were expected to wear a tie and although that had relaxed Members should dress appropriately but not told how to. With regards to training he also agreed that there were certain areas that should remain as mandatory.

Councillor Lynne Doherty was not concerned with what councillors wore but she was when it came to mandatory training. She said that when you entered an organisation there was mandatory training for a reason and for the Council safeguarding and IT security, as already mentioned, were mandatory for a reason. As Leader of her Group it was her responsibility to ensure that councillors on a committee had first been appropriately trained.

Councillor Clive Hooker said that he agreed with Councillor Masters that they had discussed the word mandatory but it was not to remove it altogether as you had to have been trained to go onto certain meetings such as planning and certain appeals. With regards to the dress code it was not considered that this should be mandatory but a general discussion on what would be appropriate, for example when sitting on bodies such as planning, was held. It did not have to be mandatory but he felt that for a Council meeting Members should be reasonably presented.

Councillor Adrian Abbs said that he supported the proposed amendment and that no one was arguing that there should not be some mandatory training for certain meetings. There were some areas that were listed as mandatory that had no way of being enforced. Where the training was important this could have been highlighted and it would have been for the Groups to manage attendance.

Councillor Owen Jeffery stated that a divide had been created over something that members broadly agreed upon. Members were in agreement that training should be mandatory when it came to a legislative requirement.

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Councillor Graham Bridgman believed that there was a legislative requirement to have licensing training in order to be on a licensing sub-committee, however there was no legislative requirement to be a member of a planning committee. It was however right that this authority insisted on planning training to reduce the risk of successful appeals. It was also appropriate for training to be mandatory on certain committees or on topics to protect the Council from prosecution and reputational harm. He also mentioned the importance of members being trained on safeguarding and their role as corporate parents. Although he agreed with the sentiment of the amendment he believed that more than just the legislative sessions should be mandatory. Councillor Cottam said that this amendment was not politically motivated, at the Member Development Group they had discussed what they felt was mandatory training and the amendment had been brought forward to aid clarity. He felt there was little value in saying something was mandatory when it could not be enforced.

Councillor Marino disagreed with the amendment. Members might not be able to attend every session but setting the programme was a Council decision and as a Council they were entitled to put on training that they felt was mandatory as there were standards that they wished to maintain. All sessions would be recorded to allow members who could not attend to watch the sessions back. The sessions were also held at different times and in a hybrid format to allow greater flexibility. He said that he had checked the minutes of Council back in 2019 and when this item had been discussed then there had been no objection to the use of the word mandatory and many of the sessions were the same as those proposed tonight. With regards to dress code he said that there was only one mention of it in the report and it was part of a larger session about surviving your first three months as a councillor. There was no mention as to what the dress code was or if one had to be followed. There had been no issues raised over the past four years and he did not see why it had become an issue.

Councillor Brooks said that there had been a good debate on the amendment. He pointed out that there were 19 sessions that had been called mandatory when some could have been called essential. There was no desire not to attend sessions but if a member could not attend there were no sanctions in place so they should not be mandatory. He felt that 'strongly recommended' would be better for sessions that you could not mandate. With regards to the dress code he said that this had been mentioned in the section for meeting function and thus could be read as rules for a dress code at meetings. After the elections his members would do their best to attend sessions but they would not consider them mandatory.

The Amendment was put to the vote and duly **LOST**.

Councillor Linden noted that it was very important for councillors to attend these sessions. Even if you had been a councillor for a number of years you always needed a refresh and could learn new things. It was also important for new councillors to attend the training, although it was important not to overwhelm them and the training should be spread out as much as possible.

Councillor James Cole encouraged the three parties to let their potential candidates know about the development programme as there would be a lot going on that they could do with knowing in advance of accepting office.

Councillor Phil Barnett mentioned that a councillor might have many commitments, such as being a Parish Councillor, and thus their time might be limited. He said that where possible there should be more than one date available for a training topic.

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Councillor Abbs said that when he became a councillor in 2019 he had been given plenty of warning about the training sessions, in fact it had been sold to him as a positive. They would be repeating this message to their candidates.

Councillor Hilary Cole advised that she had attended a number of training sessions over the years and had some sympathy with the amendment. She felt that these issues should have been resolved prior to this meeting. She did, however, believe that a lot of sessions should be mandatory as it was vital that councillors attended as many sessions as they could. Even as an established member the sessions were helpful.

Councillor Carolyn Culver was of the understanding that officers were not paid for supporting the evening training sessions and she asked that senior officers make sure that they were either paid or given time off in lieu.

Councillor Brooks said that as mentioned on his side councillors were given notice prior to the last election of training dates but it was also important to remember that in the first month they might wish to go home and sleep. Councillor Cole had said that members should go along to as many as they could but mandatory meant must do. He reiterated that they would encourage their members to attend as many sessions as they could. With regards to a dress code this was an area that was best left to the political groups to manage.

Councillor Hooker supported the report. He stated that was important to get as many members trained so that they could have balanced committees. He thanked officers and members of the working group for their contributions and producing this draft with no increase to the training budget. Consideration had been given to the timings of the meetings and recordings should be made available.

Councillor Marino thanked everyone for their contributions and felt that it had been a good debate.

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

17. **Creation of an Additional Executive Director (People), and a Transformation Service Director Role (C4345)**

Council considered a report (agenda item 19) which set out proposed revisions to the senior management structure.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Lynne Doherty and seconded by Councillor Jo Stewart;

That the Council:

- (a) create two Executive Director (ED) posts (currently one) in the People Directorate; an Executive Director (People - Adult Social Care & Public Health) [the (DASS)] and an Executive Director (Children's Services) [the DCS] and delete the Executive Director – People post.
- (b) create a new fixed term (two year) Service Director (Transformation) post.
- (c) delegate to the Service Lead for HR, in consultation with the Head of Paid Service and the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships, authority to update the Statutory Pay Policy to reflect these proposals if approved.

Councillor Doherty said she would like to move the creation of an additional Executive Director in the People's Directorate as proposed within the report to make sure the

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services concerned were fit for the future and would continue to protect the vulnerable in our society.

Councillor Adrian Abbs said that he was pleased to see a focus on this area but it did seem to be a return to the past when the Council had a post called the Corporate Director for Children and Young People prior to it being merged.

Councillor Erik Pattenden welcomed the proposals but questioned why this had not been included in the Council's budget meeting.

Councillor Dominic Boeck was pleased to see that members in principle supported the report and explained that there had been many changes since the last restructure especially in the last three years with the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and the impact of the war in Ukraine. He commended the services that supported West Berkshire's young people and families. He felt that this was the right time to split directorate responsibilities for children's and adult services at a directorate level.

Councillor Martha Vickers supported the proposals as it was important that the Council supported the vulnerable in our society especially the elderly and young people.

Councillor Jeff Brooks supported the proposals but he was surprised that the proposed positions had not been included in the budget. With regards to transformation there was a lot of change required in the organisation and he questioned why the recruitment was not external as well as internal as there could be benefit in recruiting an external candidate that could look with a fresh perspective.

Councillor Stewart thanked everyone for their comments and said with regards to the budget, consultation had been ongoing with South East Employers on the proposals and this had not been finalised in time for budget meeting. With regards to going to appoint internally first she said that there were some highly competent officers that were more than capable of undertaking the role. The recommendation to appoint came from a member panel so she was supportive of the recommendation.

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

18. **Statutory Pay Policy 2023 (C4304)**

Council considered a report (agenda item 16) seeking approval of the Statutory Pay Policy Statement for publication from 1st April 2023, in accordance with section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Tom Marino and seconded by Councillor Dennis Benneyworth;

That the Council:

- a) adopt and approve the Statutory Pay Policy Statement at appendix C of this report, for publication from 1st April 2023.
- b) delegate authority to the Service Director, Strategy and Governance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships, to update the pay policy statement following any pay awards to be effective from 1st April 2023.

Councillor Marino said that the report had been considered by the Personnel Committee on the 21st February 2023. It recommended that the Council adopt the pay policy and grant delegated authority to update the policy as required. This would be updated following the approval of agenda item 19.

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

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19. **2023/24 West Berkshire Council Timetable of Public Meetings (C4331)**

Council considered a report (agenda item 20) which recommended the timetable of meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Tom Marino and seconded by Councillor Howard Woollaston;

That the Council: approve the timetable of public meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

Councillor Marino explained that the Council was required to publish a timetable of meetings each municipal year. He thanked officers for their hard work in putting the timetable together.

AMENDMENT: Proposed by Councillor Jeff Brooks and seconded by Councillor Owen Jeffery.

That Council find an earlier date to hold the Annual Meeting of Counciland that it be held during the week beginning 15 May 2023.

Councillor Brooks said he was proposing the amendment as the proposed date (25 May 2023) was three weeks post the elections and thus three weeks before the new Executive could be appointed as well as other committees. He said he remembered when the Annual Meeting had been held on the 10th May so it could be done sooner with proposed committee memberships marked as to follow if required.

Councillor Jeffery felt that the Annual Meeting should be held as soon as reasonably practicable after the results of the election were known.

Councillor Lynne Doherty said that she did not know how many members Councillor Brooks hoped to return but in her experience it was a complex job sorting out the committee system. She said that she would not be supporting this amendment as last time there had been 19 days between the election and the Annual Meeting. The Chairman and Leader would remain in place until that meeting and so work could continue. There was also the Coronation and after all the hard work that members and officers had done during the elections they deserved the bank holiday off.

Councillor Graham Bridgman referred to a point often made by Councillor Hilary Cole that the Council was member led and officer advised and in this instance officers were advising the particular dates. There was also a difference between setting the date in an election year and those in between.

Councillor David Marsh said that his group would not require three weeks to sort out which committees their members would sit on. He felt that it should be possible to make the arrangements within a two week period.

Councillor Adrian Abbs said that history showed that there had always been an earlier meeting. The Coronation was important and officers would be able to take the bank holiday off. He felt that any of the parties would be ready for an earlier date and added that his group had a number of good candidates who would be ready to start should they be elected. Councillor Marino thanked Members' for their comments. He reiterated that there was a bank holiday after the elections and both officers and Groups needed the time between the elections and the Annual Meeting for preparation. The date of the 25th May was also in line with other Berkshire authorities and fell within the legislation.

Councillor Brooks gave examples of when the Annual Meeting had been held on earlier dates in the past and said officers would cope if it was brought forward.

The Motion was put to the vote and duly **LOST**.

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Councillor Woollaston stated that the proposed timetable was a well thought out piece of work.

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

20. Notices of Motion

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 21 refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks relating to how the Planning Department processed the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Chairman informed the Council that the motion would be referred to the Executive for consideration without debate.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Brooks and seconded by Councillor Jeremy Cottam.

Councillor Brooks introduced the motion and said he would not be repeating the cases of Mr McCabe and Mrs Dobson except to say that it was not acceptable for Mrs Dobson's petition to take seven months to get to the Executive. The motion asked for an independent review into the way the Council processed CIL, especially exemptions. The Planning Department state they are handling claims in accordance with Government guidelines. However, he felt that the process being undertaken was too rigid and gave examples of other authorities that had a less rigorous process. He also said that, to his knowledge, West Berkshire was the only council that required the applicant to sign the forms when they were being represented by an agent. He gave examples of how forms had been sent back if the signature was in the wrong box, he felt that the bureaucracy was too heavy handed. Undertaking an internal review would be another example of the Council marking its own homework.

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 21 refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Abbs relating to speed limits and '20 is Plenty'.

The Chairman informed the Council that the motion would be referred to the Transport Advisory Group and the Executive for consideration without debate.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Adrian Abbs and seconded by Councillor Pattenden.

Councillor Abbs informed that 20 is Plenty was a national campaign that had some traction especially outside schools. He stated that the Council should get behind the campaign which promoted safety. The motion proposed moving from a maybe response to these requests to a yes. He gave an example of how in 2021 in Newbury a 20 MPH zone had been approved but had not yet been implemented, this was too long. He felt that officers should be asked to develop a workable scheme to be implemented in 2023 if possible with the assumption that the Council would say yes if over 50% of a street petitioned for a speed limit.

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 21 refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Carlyne Culver relating to the 2019-2023 Term of Office.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Culver and seconded by Councillor Steve Masters;

This was the final full council of the 2019-2023 term of office.

The four years have seen the residents of West Berkshire and the Council rise to many challenges including the Covid 19 pandemic, providing homes for people fleeing war in Ukraine, and the cost of living crisis.

This council resolves:

To thank all Council officers for their service during this term of office.

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To thank all emergency workers and volunteers who have supported people through these challenges.

To pay tribute to those we have lost.

To thank all members for their service to the residents of West Berkshire.

To wish all members who are not seeking re-election all the best for the future.

Councillor Culver said that the last four years had seen residents and West Berkshire Council rise to many challenges including the pandemic, providing homes to people fleeing the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis. She wanted to thank officers and members for their service as well as pay tribute to those who lost their lives such as Councillor Peter Argyle and officers such as Stuart Clark.

Councillor Culver mentioned a number of teams who had worked especially hard during these years supporting our residents. She also mentioned the number of volunteers throughout the district who had given their time to support residents. Officers had undertaken additional work when they themselves were under pressure with staff vacancies and inadequate resources in some cases. She thanked the councillors who were not seeking re-election for their work, and thanked the Chairman as this was his last meeting before the elections.

Councillor Brooks felt sure that the motion would get cross party support as our officers worked very hard. Councillors did not get elected to do bad things they tried to do something good for their residents. He thanked all non-returning members and wished them all the best in their future endeavours.

Councillor Graham Bridgman was fully supportive of the motion and as an Executive Member he often thanked officers for their hard work. He also mentioned the occasions where there had been cross party work such as the Constitution Review Task Group. He highlighted the work of emergency workers and volunteers during the pandemic and the way communities came together.

Councillor Abbs said that as a new Councillor in 2019 he wished to give thanks for all the support he was given by officers. He highlighted a number of officers that had helped him in his work as a ward councillor.

Councillor Graham Pask reiterated the comments that had been made in support of the motion but also highlighted the much valued work of volunteers in Bucklebury.

Councillor Masters, as seconder to the motion, was pleased to see the cross party support and highlighted a number of teams for their good work, such as those who had supported rough sleepers during the pandemic.

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

21. **Members' Questions**

A full transcription of the Member question and answer session is available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

(a) A question standing in the name of Councillor Lee Dillon (asked by Councillor Erik Pattenden) on the subject of consultants for the Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside.

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(b) A question standing in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs on the subject of the Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Local Plan was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside.

(c) A question standing in the name of Councillor Steve Masters on the growing need for foodbanks was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Economic Development.

(d) A question standing in the name of Councillor Phil Barnett on the subject of pot holes was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Countryside.

(e) A question standing in the name of Councillor Masters on the subject of voter ID registration was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships.

(f) A question standing in the name of Councillor Masters on the subject of the Voter Authority Certificate was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships.

(g) A question standing in the name of Councillor Masters on the subject of the cost of implementing voter ID was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Internal Governance and Strategic Partnerships.

(The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and closed at 10.07 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature