# DRAFT

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

# EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL

# MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

# THURSDAY 14 MAY 2026

**Councillors Present**: Stephanie Steevenson (Chairman), Martha Vickers (Vice-Chairman), Adrian Abbs, Antony Amirtharaj, Phil Barnett, Dennis Benneyworth, Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks, Billy Drummond, Nick Carter, Patrick Clark, Heather Codling, Laura Coyle, Carolyne Culver, Paul Dick, Nigel Foot, Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Clive Hooker, Owen Jeffery, Paul Kander, Janine Lewis, Ross Mackinnon, Alan Macro, David Marsh, Geoff Mayes, Tom McCann, Biyi Oloko, Justin Pemberton, Vicky Poole, Christopher Read, Richard Somner, Louise Sturgess, Clive Taylor, Tony Vickers, and Howard Woollaston

**Also Present:** Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive), Sarah Clarke (Monitoring Officer and Executive Director – Resources), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director – Place), Ashley Milum (Service Director – Education), Martyn Sargeant (Service Director for Strategy & Governance), Melanie Booth (Group Executive – Liberal Democrats), Jake Carpenter (Group Executive – Conservatives), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Honorary Alderman Adrian Edwards, and Honorary Alderman Tony Linden

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Iain Cottingham, Councillor Martin Colston, Councillor Erik Pattenden, Councillor Joanne Stewart, Councillor Matt Shakespeare, Councillor Jane Langford, Councillor Jeremy Cottam, Honorary Alderman Hilary Cole, Honorary Alderman Anthony Stansfeld, Honorary Alderman Rick Jones, Honorary Alderman Paul Bryant, Honorary Alderman Andrew Rowles, Honorary Alderman Graham Bridgman, Honorary Alderman Alan Law, Honorary AldermanGordon Lundie

## PART I

### 1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Adrian Abbs declared that he had recently became Leader of the West Berkshire Residents Party. However, as this was not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the item.

### 2. Requisition to the Chairman of Council

Before Council considered the requisition to the Chairman of Council (Agenda Item 3) on the pedestrianisation of Newbury Town Centre and transparency and timely-decision making, Councillor Ross Mackinnon made a point of order.

Due to the scheduling of the Extraordinary Council meeting, he believed that the subject had become procedurally irrelevant at this point in time given that a report on pedestrianisation had recently been published in advance of the next Executive meeting being held on 21 May 2026. This, he suggested, looked like it was the result of procedural manipulation for political convenience. Although the Extraordinary Council meeting complied with the procedure, he contended that it did not comply with its spirit, and that it was a cynical move to schedule it at this time.

In response, the relevant Portfolio Holder, Councillor Stuart Gourley, raised a point of explanation. He informed Members that the timetabling of the Executives response to the pedestrianisation of Newbury Town Centre was already laid out, and that it was always going to be determined before the end of spring 2026.

The Chairman noted the point of order, and informed Council that the requisition had been received on the Sunday a week before Easter. This had been directed to the then Vice-Chairman (now Chairman) as the previous Chairman was away for Easter, like many other Members would have been. She then reviewed all available options whilst at no point talking to the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Administration. The Chairman determined that the next suitable opportunity for an Extraordinary Council meeting would be the 7 May. However, as the already scheduled Annual Meeting was planned for the week after that, on the 14 May, she decided to hold this Extraordinary meeting at this point to enable as many Members to attend the meeting as possible. Although there was a statutory deadline for when the meeting should be called, which was fully complied with, there was no deadline for when the meeting itself needed to be held. Having been satisfied with the scheduling of this Extraordinary Council, the Chairman determined to proceed with the meeting.

As no Member moved the motion, and as there was no other business on the agenda, the Chairman called the meeting to a close.

*(The meeting commenced at 8.50pm and closed at 9.01pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** …………………………………………….

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