

Response to referred Place Motions

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	23 March 2023
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	3 March 2023
Report Author:	Jenny Graham
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4327

1 Purpose of the Report

Over the last 18 months a number of motions proposed at Full Council meetings have been referred to and discussed at other groups and Boards dealing with functions of the Place Directorate. The purpose of this report is to provide details of actions taken and proposed responses to each of these seven motions.

2 Recommendations

The table below provides a summary of the recommendations relevant to each motion. The Executive are asked to agree these recommended responses and endorse the future recommended actions.

Member raising Motion	Motion Title	Recommended Response	Recommended further actions
Cllr Jeff Brooks	Booking systems at HWRCs See Appendix A for full details	A response was provided nearer the time and actions taken in conjunction with Portfolio Holder	No further actions recommended
Cllr Tony Vickers	Public funds for public access See Appendix B for full details	One element of the motion is no longer relevant. The remaining call to action in the Motion is supported.	The Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership and Rural Business Forum both have a part to play in taking this forward.

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<p>Cllr Carolyne Culver</p>	<p>Declare an ecological emergency</p> <p>See Appendix C for full details</p>	<p>The motion is rejected</p> <p>However, the aim of reversing the decline in biodiversity is supported</p>	<p>Opportunities for positive action will be taken particularly in relation to engaging with the Nature Recovery Network Strategy (Berkshire level) and the Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership in West Berkshire</p>
<p>Cllr Carolyne Culver</p>	<p>Response to COP26 in Glasgow</p> <p>See Appendices D and E for full details</p>	<p>The motion is rejected.</p> <p>However, a number of the proposals have been taken forward by the Council.</p>	<p>i) Alok Sharma MP be invited to speak to the Environment Advisory Group now that he is not so busy with COP business.</p> <p>ii) To continue to progress policies through the Local Plan Review that require high energy efficiency standards and to develop an SPD or equivalent to support these policies.</p>
<p>Cllr Adrian Abbs</p>	<p>High Street Canopies</p> <p>See Appendix F for full details</p>	<p>The motion is rejected</p> <p>A number of the proposals are already covered by BAU activities</p>	<p>Officers will continue to consider opportunities for increasing trees in urban areas where it is appropriate and possible to do so and make use of additional funds agreed at Full Council on 2 March 2023</p>
<p>Cllr Adrian Abbs</p>	<p>Domestic Energy Efficiency</p> <p>See Appendix G for full details</p>	<p>Due to the lack of staff resource available to consider this detail to date, it is difficult to either confirm support for the motion or reject it at this stage.</p>	<p>When the Energy and Carbon Team are up to full strength the scoping of this project can start. A further recommendation will then be made to the Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Environment Advisory Group considering the details of a possible project with a particular focus on funding, resources and deliverability.</p>

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Cllr Jeff Brooks	<p>Pedestrianisation of Northbrook Street and Market Place, Newbury (extended hours)</p> <p>See Appendix H for full details</p>	<p>The proposals in the motion will be considered as part of the wider Newbury Masterplan delivery programme</p>	<p>Further investigation of the pedestrianisation proposal will be included as a workstream in the Newbury Masterplan delivery programme, which is being developed currently and will include further engagement with stakeholders in the town centre.</p>
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3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>Some projects if taken further will need detailed financial consideration, for example, a domestic energy efficiency scheme for the District. The financial elements of such a scheme will be dealt with in the scoping and development of a business case and be clearly presented prior to any decision being made to progress.</p> <p>In terms of the Pedestrianisation item for Newbury Town Centre (appendix H), the recommended traffic modelling work was estimated to cost up to £15,000 in 2020. This is likely to be substantially more now. Should changes to the traffic management arrangements in Newbury town centre be made in the longer term, it is likely that capital funding would be required.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>There are no direct human resource implications as a result of this report. Any future schemes connected to these motions that have HR implications will be dealt with at a future stage and prior to any projects progressing.</p>
Legal:	<p>There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report. It is likely that there will be legal implications relating to future schemes connected with these motions. These will be dealt with at a future stage and prior to any projects progressing.</p>

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Risk Management:	Risk management will be dealt with within the business cases of any projects flowing from these motions.			
Property:	There may be some impacts to certain Council physical assets (for example highways and footways if additional trees are placed in high streets). These will need to be considered on a case by case basis and assessed accordingly.			
Policy:	The motions being considered in this report are all linked in various ways to the delivery of the Council's Environment Strategy and Economic Development Strategy.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		N/A The equalities impacts of any detailed projects flowing from any of the motions considered will be addressed at the time of the detailed projects coming forward for decision.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		N/A As above – any of these impacts will be dealt with at the detailed project stage where applicable
Environmental Impact:	X			All the motions proposed are driven by creating a positive environmental impact.
Health Impact:	X			A number of the proposals whilst having a general positive environmental impact will also have specific benefits for physical and mental health.

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ICT Impact:		X		n/a
Digital Services Impact:		X		n/a
Council Strategy Priorities:	X			<p>The motions cover actions that will have a positive impact on the Council achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Its priority of maintaining a green district - The Health and Wellbeing Board's priorities of 'beautiful landscapes and strong cultural offering' and health and wellbeing of everyone is prioritised'
Core Business:	X			Supporting our Environment Strategy Delivery Plan
Data Impact:		X		n/a
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>All the motions detailed in Appendices A to G have been discussed by the Environment Advisory Group (EAG) with some further discussions taking place on some aspects with individual Members and Officers and in some small group meeting settings.</p> <p>The motion relating to pedestrianisation in Newbury Town Centre (Appendix H) has been discussed by the Economic Development Team and the report has been presented to and approved by Economic Development Board, and the Highways Team.</p>			

4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 This report is being brought to the Executive to make a series of recommendations linked with motions that have been presented at Full Council over the last 18 months. These motions have been linked with Executive functions and have all been referred to the cross-party Environment Advisory Group or Economic Development Board for discussion.
- 4.2 The Environment Advisory Group / Economic Development Board have considered these motions engaging in debate and discussion at either one or two of their regular

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meetings and have in one case dealt with further details by meeting as a small focused sub-group.

4.3 The topics of the motions cover a variety of issues:

- Practical issues at the District's two household waste recycling centres
- How government funding is used to create opportunities to access the countryside and what we can do locally to support public access
- Our response to the negative impacts on biodiversity and the ecological crisis
- Our response to COP26 and how we can take positive action
- Creating high street canopies to help deal with climate issues
- A possible way in which West Berkshire homes can be helped to be more energy efficient and reduce their carbon impact and running costs
- Extension to the hours of pedestrianisation for Northbrook Street and Market Place in Newbury town centre.

4.4 The details of the proposals set out in the appendices to this report have been recommended to be rejected or supported depending on the acceptability of each motion as a whole. In the cases where the motion is rejected it is always the case that part of the proposal is acceptable but just not the full motion. The appendices and recommendations table in section 2 above detail the positive actions alongside any motion that has been rejected.

4.5 Many of the actions have already taken place and this report is the formal recommending of responses to the motions. Some of the actions and proposals have not yet started and will be addressed by the relevant officer teams when resources are in place to do so.

5 Supporting Information

Introduction

5.1 The report is seeking to formally respond to a number of motions that have been referred by Full Council to the Environment Advisory Group / Economic Development Board for discussion.

5.2 Each motion deals with a different topic and has its own set of proposals. The appendices of this report have therefore been used to set out the following information, where relevant, for each motion:

- The full motion wording as presented to Full Council
- Any background information
- Responses to the proposals included in the motion, summary of feedback from discussions held at the Environment Advisory Group / Economic Development Board meeting(s) and any other options considered
- Recommended overall response to the motion and any recommended actions.

Proposals

5.3 The details for each motion as set out above are included in the appendices as listed in Section 8 of this report.

6 Other options considered

Where there have been options to consider in relation to the motions these are included in the appendices.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Motions are often referred to other meetings from Full Council to allow for a more detailed discussion than there is time for at Full Council meetings. This has been the case for a number of motions that relate to environmental and economic development topics.

7.2 This paper brings together the discussions involving seven motions that have been referred to the Environment Advisory Group / Economic Development Board and have not yet been reported to the Executive for a formal response.

7.3 The recommendation relating to each motion is set out in the table in section 2 of this report with related actions also noted.

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix A – Booking systems at HWRCs

8.2 Appendix B – Public Funds for Public Access

8.3 Appendix C – Declaration of Ecological Emergency

8.4 Appendix D – Response to COP26 in Glasgow

8.5 Appendix E – Berkshire Pension Fund – Responsible Investment Policy

8.6 Appendix F – High Street Canopies

8.7 Appendix G – Domestic Energy Efficiency

8.8 Appendix H – Pedestrianisation of Northbrook Street and Market Place, Newbury

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

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- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

Officer details:

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Booking systems at HWRCs

Motion proposed by: Cllr Jeff Brooks

Date of Full Council Meeting: 8th July 2021

Date(s) considered by EAG: September 2021 and November 2021

Background

This motion relates to activities taking place at West Berkshire's two Household Waste Recycling Centres. It requests that the restrictions on number of bookings per week and the closing times of the HWRCs in summer months are reconsidered.

The motion required quick consideration as the topics raised were very current to the time. By the time the next EAG meeting took place, there had already been a response to this motion.

The full wording of the motion and the response that went to Cllr Brooks from Cllr Ardagh-Walter is included below.

Full Motion Wording

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Jeff Brooks and seconded by Councillor Adrian Abbs.

"During the period from March 2020 to May 2021 the public understood the need for the Council to take steps to protect them from Covid 19 and amongst those measures people understood the introduction of the Booking system at our two HWRCs in order to manage social distancing and those centres.

Now that our society is opening up, the public should expect the Council to rapidly re-instate the services that they pay their Council Tax to have available to them.

Whilst the Booking system at these facilities has merit, consultation with the public should be undertaken to help determine if such a system should remain in place.

Whilst that is undertaken, there is no reason for the restriction that allows a household to visit the facilities only once a week and for those facilities to close at 17.30 when they would normally stay open much later in the spring and summer months.

Since both centres are not particularly busy and a booking can be made on the day or at least the following day, we call upon the Council to immediately lift the once a week restriction and extend the opening hours without delay.

This is the time of year when households need maximum access to the facilities and we are bound to provide the access they are used to and have paid for."

Response to Motion

Dear Cllr Brooks

Thank you for your motion about the continued use of the booking system at the Council's and concerns about resident access to the HWRCs.

Booking System

Like many local authorities in the country, the Council had to limit the number of visits during the pandemic so that suitable social distancing could be maintained onsite in the interest of health and safety for both visitors and site staff.

The reduced availability of slots meant that we needed to implement an approach which could give as many residents as possible the opportunity to secure bookings within a reasonable period of time. The restriction of one visit per week was introduced for this reason by the Council and many other local authorities. I am pleased to confirm that this restriction has recently been removed as an operational change following an assessment of the evolving government guidance and after obtaining feedback from the waste contractor and key internal stakeholders including the Council's Executive and the Opposition Group. The Council's waste team has also been actively monitoring traffic flows through the site and has recently increased the number of slots available.

Whilst we no longer have that restriction in West Berkshire, it is worth mentioning that many English councils including our neighbours in [Reading](#), Wokingham and Bracknell Forest continue to keep the restriction of one HWRC visit per week for their residents.

The use of the booking system continues to be very popular among a significant majority of site users. This is borne out by the results of recent user surveys and the Council continues to receive positive feedback via email and social media channels. Independent Google [customer reviews](#) about our recycling centres also include many compliments about the use of booking system.

In your motion it has been indicated that the sites were not particularly busy at this time. Please note that the demand for recycling centres is changeable and can be influenced by various factors including seasonality, prevailing weather and economic sentiment e.g. people do more renovations or furniture upgrades when they are feeling positive about

their financial outlook. Additionally, demand for the recycling centre increases considerably during Bank Holidays. The booking system remains a vital tool for managing customer demand, even outside of the peak pandemic period. For example, in recent weeks, it has been helpful to the Council in managing site access at the Newtown Road facility when there have been engineering works on the adjoining roads.

Site Opening Hours

In relation to your query about the site opening hours, please note that the Council decided during winter 2019/20 to amend the HWRC opening hours so that residents across the District had improved access to the two facilities and service availability between the two sites was more comparable effective from 01 April 2020. The current opening hours are shown in the table below:

HWRC Site	Current Winter Hours (October to March)	Current Summer Hours (April to September)
Padworth HWRC	9am to 6pm	9am to 6pm*
Newtown Road	9am to 6pm	9am to 6pm (everyday apart from Thursdays) 9am to 8pm** (Thursdays)

The Council is reasonably satisfied that the current opening hours and access provision to residents is at a good level. This is supported by the feedback we continue to receive from our residents. We will keep the situation under review.

Sincerely,

Cllr Steve Ardagh-Walter

Executive Member for the Environment

Notes:

*Planning conditions applicable to the Padworth site do not allow it to open beyond 6pm.

**It was not feasible to implement the extended summer opening on Thursdays at the Newtown Road facility during the pandemic. The intention is to implement the extended opening from April 2022, provided that prevailing circumstances allow e.g. when the pandemic is not impacting staff availability or requiring further restriction of customer movements.

Prior to the new opening hours being introduced, the substantive site opening hours at Padworth were 12noon to 6pm Monday to Friday, and 8am to 6pm on Saturday, Sunday and on Bank Holidays. Opening hours of the Newtown Road HWRC have remained unchanged during the trial period and are 8.30am to 5.30pm daily during the winter (i.e. October to March) and 8.30am to 7.30pm during the summer (i.e. April to September).

Available data shows that when the previous opening hours were in use, less than 3% of site traffic occurred before 9am and equally the period after 7pm was underutilised by customers.

The Council's sites are open every day of the year including Bank Holidays, with the exception of Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Recommended overall response and any recommended actions

No further action is recommended as a full response was provided much nearer the time as can be seen above. This information needs to be formally reported back to Full Council in order that the actions taken in line with the desires of the motion can be recorded.

Public Funds for Public Access

Motion proposed by: Cllr Tony Vickers

Date of Full Council Meeting: 8th July 2021

Date(s) considered by EAG: September 2021 and November 2021

Full Motion Wording

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Tony Vickers and seconded by Councillor Howard Woollaston.

That Council notes:

“1. How the pandemic has highlighted the importance of outdoor exercise for our mental and physical health and wellbeing and our understanding of the interconnections between farming, biodiversity and food production;

2. That the Environment Agency accepts that the benefits of outdoor exercise could be worth billions to the NHS and care services;

3. That the Environment Bill includes provision for “public funds for public goods”;

4. That the Agriculture Act contains powers to provide financial assistance to support public access to the countryside, through replacing the EU funding system known as the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP);

5. The excellent work done by this Council’s Rights of Way Team and many volunteers from bodies represented on the Mid & West Berkshire Local Access Forum to maintain and improve public access to our beautiful countryside, and

6. The emphasis in our local planning and transport policies towards more ‘active travel’ opportunities, as part of combating Climate Change.

Council therefore supports the campaign of the Outdoor Access Alliance of organisations that represent countryside access groups to enable this “BREXIT Bonus” for funding to be channelled through local government to help improve our rights of way network;

And calls on this Council to work with local and national organisations to improve the relationship between urban communities, landowners and farmers as the rural environment and economy is transformed by BREXIT and climate change, so that all our residents better understand the connections between food production, biodiversity, landscape and public health.”

Background

With the transition out of the EU, agricultural policy for England has been the source of much debate. The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) will no longer apply and at the time of the motion being proposed a ‘BREXIT Bonus’ was being discussed which would

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include support for access to the countryside. The many changes in recent UK Government leadership sent this area of policy into turmoil with announcements of scrapping the 'BREXIT Bonus' and environmental groups claiming this was a big hit on the environment.

The latest position is that in January 2023 the Government (DEFRA) published an [update note](#) relating to Environmental Land Management (ELM). The update sets out how government will pay for land-based environment and climate goods and services.

Response to the Motion

There are two 'calls to action' within the motion, one in each of the last two paragraphs.

The first is to support the campaign of the Outdoor Access Alliance of organisations that represent countryside access groups. The campaign included seeking the funding to be invested in our rights of way network in order to help improve public access.

The situation has moved on since this point (as described above) and so there is no immediate call to support a current campaign.

The second call to action is to work with local and national organisations to improve the relationship between urban communities, landowners and farmers so that residents better understand the connections between food production, biodiversity, landscape and public health.

This is something that the work of the Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership can assist with and is already exploring. A pilot project is being developed and this has public access as one of the key elements of the scheme. The Rural Business Forum could also have a part to play.

Recommended overall response and any recommended actions

The main remaining aim of the motion is supported and opportunities will be taken to improve the relationship between urban communities, landowners and farmers so that there is a better understanding of the connections between food production, biodiversity, landscape and public health.

The Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership and the Rural Business Forum have a role to play in developing opportunities in relation to this motion.

Declaration of Ecological Emergency

Motion proposed by: Cllr Carlyne Culver

Date of Full Council Meeting: 9th September 2021

Date(s) considered by EAG: September 2021 and November 2021

Full Motion Wording

MOTION: The following Motion was submitted in the name of Councillor Carlyne Culver:

“West Berkshire Council notes:

West Berkshire Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and subsequently produced an Environment Strategy and Environment Strategy Delivery Plan, with the objective of delivering carbon neutrality by 2030 in support of limiting global warming to less than 1.5 degrees centigrade.

The Environment Strategy Delivery Plan includes objectives designed to protect and enhance biodiversity.

The climate emergency cannot be tackled by reducing emissions in isolation. Our ecological systems are intrinsic to life on earth and should be protected and enhanced as a valued asset.

The State of Nature 2019 report highlighted the critical decline in biodiversity in the UK, where 15 per cent of species are threatened with extinction.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the relationship between humans and nature. When we destroy and degrade habitats, we disrupt the equilibrium of our ecological systems resulting in an increased risk of transference of pandemic type diseases between wildlife and humans.

The [State of the World's Plants and Fungi 2020 report](#) from Royal Botanic Gardens Kew estimated that 39 per cent of plants are threatened with extinction.

The IPCC Report Sixth Assessment Report published in August 2021 concluded that climate change is 'widespread, rapid and intensifying' and urgent action is required to reduce carbon emissions and secure the long-term sustainability of planet earth and its inhabitants.

In June the previously titled Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill was reintroduced for the 2021/22 parliamentary session as the Climate and Ecology Bill with support from across the House of Commons.

The government is running a public consultation about Nature Recovery Network Strategies, which ends on 2 November 2021.

West Berkshire Council resolves to:

- 1) Declare an ecological emergency.

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- 2) Support the Climate and Ecology Bill and ask the Leader to write to our three local MPs urging them to support it.
- 3) Participate constructively in the government's public consultation about Nature Recovery Network Strategies before it closes on 2 November."

Background

The Climate and Ecology Bill, sponsored by Lord Redesdale, has since been amended and is now the Ecology Bill (having lost the climate element). It aims to see the government commit to reverse – not just halt – nature decline by 2030. The Bill is currently at the Report stage with the House of Lords.

Response to the Motion

There are 3 proposals for action within the motion. The first two relate to declaring an ecological emergency and supporting the Climate and Ecology Bill as it was then. There was concern for biodiversity within EAG and support for the reversal of its decline. It was recognised that we should be doing all we can in relation to this agenda.

At the time of the motion and discussion at EAG, there was a focus on the Environment Bill (now the Environment Act) which was more advanced and it was the Chair's view that this should be the focus and that we dealt with ecological matters and biodiversity within our own Environment Strategy.

West Berkshire's Environment Strategy includes the following:

'...we are committed to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. In order to do so, we will work with partners to:

- *Develop a Nature Recovery Plan which will further improve biodiversity and wildlife in the district.*
- *Encourage our residents to explore the natural environment, to become active partners in the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and to take ownership of the management of the natural environment.*
- *Apply emerging Government requirements for environmental protection and improved biodiversity through the planning process'*

The Environment Advisory Group did not conclude that they would recommend the Council declares an ecological emergency and, whilst not disagreeing with the Climate and Ecology Bill, the focus at the time was the Environment Bill.

The third part of the motion was to engage with government's public consultation about Nature Recovery Network Strategies. This was firmly supported by EAG and a full response, led by Councillor Culver, was submitted by the consultation deadline.

Much of the work of the Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership is concerned with biodiversity enhancement and this is very much the focus of some landowners in West Berkshire.

Recommended overall response and any recommended actions

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The exact calls to action in the motion were not all acted upon, therefore the motion is rejected. However, the aim of reversing the decline in biodiversity is supported and opportunities for positive action are being taken through the work of the Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership and in line with the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan.

The Council remains engaged with the cross Berkshire Nature Recovery Network Strategy work which is being led by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Response to COP26 in Glasgow

Motion proposed by: Cllr Carolyne Culver

Date of Full Council Meeting: 18th January 2022

Date(s) considered by EAG: April 2022

Full Motion Wording

MOTION: The following Motion was submitted in the name of Councillor Carolyne Culver:

Council notes: That COP26 in Glasgow concluded with the Glasgow Climate Pact, which recognises a crucial role for communities and local authorities. By “recognizing the important role of ... local communities and civil society, including youth and children, in addressing and responding to climate change, and highlighting the urgent need for multilevel and cooperative action” the Pact makes plain the need for action at every level of government and society.

That shortly before the Glasgow conference the UK government published its Net Zero Strategy, which includes the intention to establish a Net Zero Forum to coordinate the strategy with local government.

That COP26 failed to provide the national targets that could put the world on course for limiting global average temperature rise to 1.5C; failed to provide the carbon price mechanisms needed to shift the world economy away from fossil fuels; failed to provide the necessary finance for less developed nations to develop without fossil fuels or to deal with the loss and damage caused to them by wealthier nations that are historically responsible; failed to outlaw all loopholes in ‘offsetting’ mechanisms; and failed to commit to phasing out fossil fuels.

Council believes: That the chances for a strong outcome from COP26 were weakened by the UK government’s mixed messages on climate action, not least the reduction in tax on internal flights, the continued commitment to new fossil fuel extraction in Cumbria and the North Sea oil fields, and cuts to overseas aid.

If we are to become a carbon neutral district we need new developments to be carbon neutral and we need to divest from all investment in fossil fuels.

Council resolves:

- 1) To write to Alok Sharma MP to thank him for his work so far and urge him to apply maximum pressure to all parties for the remainder of his presidency.
- 2) To organise carbon literacy training and briefing sessions for council staff and members to ensure we are consistent in addressing the climate emergency across all our activities.
- 3) To organise a second climate conference in West Berkshire which brings all stakeholders together.

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- 4) To work with other unitary authorities in Berkshire to divest staff pension funds from fossil fuels, including those who are merely transitioning because we only have nine years left to achieve carbon neutrality. Instead, invest in funds that are contributing to decarbonisation and adaptation to climate change.
- 5) To require developers to submit a Climate Change Declaration with their planning applications to encourage them to build to higher energy efficiency standards.
- 6) To write to our three local MPs urging them to lobby the government for the following:
 - Conduct an independent review into UK fossil fuel subsidies and set out a plan and timetable to phase these out.
 - Commit to no more coal, oil or gas extraction in the UK, and no more UK investments in fossil fuel extraction overseas.
 - Commit to no airport expansion across the UK, and for international aviation and shipping decarbonisation to be included in nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in future trade deals.

Background

The Conference of the Parties, Climate Change Conference of the UN, known as COP26 took place in Glasgow in autumn 2021. Alok Sharma, MP was President of COP26. The Conference resulted in the Glasgow Climate Pact, which recognises a crucial role for communities and local authorities.

The six actions at local government level that the motion calls for in this regard are set out in the following section with comments against each and updates on any actions taken.

Response to the Motion

Action 1: To write to Alok Sharma MP to thank him for his work so far and urge him to apply maximum pressure to all parties for the remainder of his presidency.

There was no objection to engaging with Alok Sharma MP, however, the writing of a letter did not happen at the time. It has recently been suggested by EAG that Alok Sharma is invited to speak to EAG now that his timetable is not dominated by COP business.

Action 2: To organise carbon literacy training and briefing sessions for council staff and members to ensure we are consistent in addressing the climate emergency across all our activities.

The development of some staff training modules addressing the themes of climate change, carbon reduction, sustainability, food waste etc. is complete and the training is available on the online training programme for staff. The modules have been developed and tested with a small group of colleagues. The aim was that this could be added to the mandatory training for staff but HR have advised that it would not meet the criteria for mandatory training.

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The Environment Delivery Team will be working on ways to best engage staff in this training including using the Eco-Champions Network and other internal communications.

Some interactive sessions for Members have taken place where they have met some of the team from across the Environment Department and been able to find out about how the Council's declaration of a climate emergency is being translated into actions and projects. Members are also encouraged to engage with the Local Government Association's training for Members on Climate Change.

Action 3: To organise a second climate conference in West Berkshire which brings all stakeholders together.

The first climate conference was held in October 2019 a few months after the declaration of a climate emergency in West Berkshire and before the Environment Strategy was developed. The question of resource was considered in relation to the idea of having a second climate conference. A huge amount of officer time would be needed to put on a conference of a similar nature to the first one. This would take officers away from delivering the actions and projects in the Environment Strategy Delivery Plan. The world has moved on a great deal since 2019 and it was recognised that there may be alternative ways in which a 'West Berkshire Climate Conference' could be delivered which might not be so resource hungry.

As an alternative to a climate conference the Council focused on a month focused on climate or 'green' activities in September 2022. A packed programme was put together including webinars, free bus travel days, promotion of Eco Schools, support for Great Big Green Week and partnering with 'GreenFest'. Some activities could not go ahead as planned due to the passing of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II but the focus remained for the month and little beyond into October to cover some areas that were able to be postponed.



Consideration will be given as to whether a 'focus month' is something to repeat in the future.

Action 4: To work with other unitary authorities in Berkshire to divest staff pension funds from fossil fuels, including those who are merely transitioning because we only have nine years left to achieve carbon neutrality. Instead, invest in funds that are contributing to decarbonisation and adaptation to climate change.

It is considered that this topic of the investment of the Berkshire Pension Fund has already been the subject of detailed debate. It is therefore not considered appropriate to re-visit the issues within such a short period of time. For example, the Berkshire Pension Fund and its Responsible Investment Policy has previously been considered

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at Environment Board and a note prepared to set out the position (see Appendix E for information).

Action 5: To require developers to submit a Climate Change Declaration with their planning applications to encourage them to build to higher energy efficiency standards.

Currently we do not have a policy basis to require developers to submit a Climate Change Declaration or Climate Change Statement as they may be referred to. They could be encouraged to do so to demonstrate how their development helps to meet the climate emergency declared in West Berkshire in July 2019. We cannot, however, force these statements to be submitted and, if they are provided, there is no way of enforcing them.

Through the Local Plan Review officers have taken the opportunity to strengthen the policy basis reflecting the change in local, national and global circumstances since the last Local Plan was written. Work has taken place to develop a policy that will help to drive high environmental standards for developments in West Berkshire. It is considered that this strengthening of policy should be the focus for the longer term impact and work will continue to support the progress of this policy direction through the Local Plan Examination stage.

Action 6: To write to our three local MPs urging them to lobby the government for the following:

- Conduct an independent review into UK fossil fuel subsidies and set out a plan and timetable to phase these out.
- Commit to no more coal, oil or gas extraction in the UK, and no more UK investments in fossil fuel extraction overseas.
- Commit to no airport expansion across the UK, and for international aviation and shipping decarbonisation to be included in nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in future trade deals.

There is much debate around energy generation, energy security and energy prices at this time. The motion was written prior to the outbreak of war between Russian and Ukraine and the rising fuel costs and uncertainty about future energy prices. However, taking into account the current situation, it is not considered appropriate to progress lobbying as described in the motion although lobbying around energy security with a focus on renewables would be appropriate.

The Council has an agreed position on the expansion of Heathrow airport which was agreed at the [Full Council meeting on 12th September 2019](#).

Recommended overall response and any recommended actions

Whilst the motion in full is not supported, there are elements that have been taken forward either in line with the motion or through alternative actions.

Some of these elements are ongoing (points 2,3 and 5) and have the potential to have further lasting benefits.

Appendix E

Berkshire Pension Fund – Responsible Investment Policy

The note below was produced to support Members and Officers respond to questions regarding the nature of employee pension investments and how this aligns with fighting climate change.

In addition to the note below, the following summary could be used as a more succinct response which refers the questioner to the more detailed note if further information is required:

West Berkshire Council's employee pensions are part of the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund (RCBPF). The Council as a participant employer of the RCBPF is keen to ensure that investments made in relation to employee pensions reflect the importance of addressing climate change and the transition to a low-carbon world. This aligns with the Environment Strategy for West Berkshire and the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency.

The Berkshire Pension Fund Committee agreed a Responsible Investment Policy at its meeting in March 2021 and the Council welcomes the more proactive approach to addressing climate change that this sets out. This policy guides the fund to engage more closely with invested companies seeking evidence that they are planning for the transition to a low-carbon economy and working to meet future emissions reduction targets under the Paris Agreement. The policy also ensures that there will be no new investments in fossil fuel companies which are ignoring the risks of climate change.

The Council acknowledges and supports the principle that the Responsible Investment Policy should be reviewed regularly in order to continue recognising and reflecting best practice and addressing emerging priorities and changing situations.

More details in relation to this along with relevant links to further information including the Responsible Investment Policy are included in the attached note.

This is being brought to the Environment Board for their awareness and to seek endorsement.

A note on the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund and its Responsible Investment Policy

1 Purpose of this note

- 1.1 This note sets out West Berkshire Council's support for the Responsible Investment Policy adopted by the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund. In particular, it highlights how that policy identifies climate change as a core priority in order to guide new investment decisions and to influence existing investment in the transition to a low-carbon economy.

2 Background

- 2.1 West Berkshire Council's employee pensions are part of the Royal County of Berkshire Pension Fund (RCBPF). The RCBPF administers the Local Government Pension Scheme on behalf of over 300 scheme employers. It is part of the Local Pensions Partnership (LPP) which is one of eight investment pools set up to better manage the 89 previously separately invested funds across England and Wales.
- 2.2 There has been increased public interest and concern over climate change and many Councils and other organisations are putting plans in place to help tackle this important issue. In response to this and other key issues, the RCBPF has updated its Responsible Investment Policy.

3 Responsible Investment Policy (RCBPF)

- 3.1 The [Responsible Investment Policy](#) was agreed by the Berkshire Pension Fund Committee on 22nd March 2021.
- 3.2 The implementation of the RI policy is through the activities of Local Pensions Partnership Investments (LPPi) which provides investment management services for all of the RCBPF assets and is one of the two core operations of the LPP.
- 3.3 Identifying core priorities for RI is an important part of focussing the attention of LPPi on the issues of greatest importance to the RCBPF. The issues identified as being of primary concern within the policy are:
 - Climate change – engaging with pension funds and other stakeholders to develop and share best practice, recognising and managing the risks and opportunities investments face from climate change;

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- Corporate Governance – promoting the case for well managed companies which implement fair and just employment practices;
- 3.4 Whilst the above are the main priorities, the RI policy report includes a number of other RI issues which are of interest and will be kept under review.
- 3.5 Taking the core priority of Climate Change which is the focus of this note, the RI policy states that RCBPF will endeavour to carry out the following:
- (a) Where existing investments in fossil fuel companies are in place and identified, we expect those companies to be able to demonstrate planning for the global transition to a low-carbon economy and to meet future emissions reduction targets under the Paris Agreement or other appropriate initiatives. Where they are not, and opportunities for engagement and reform of the company or project are not possible or do not exist, then the RCBPF will make all reasonable efforts to divest provided that this will result in no material financial detriment, either through increased costs or increased investment risk.
 - (b) Where our fiduciary duty allows, we will not consider new active investments in fossil fuel companies directly engaged in the extraction of coal, oil and natural gas as sources of energy which are ignoring the risks of climate change. The RCBPF expects LPPI to take steps to ensure that the level of exposure to climate change investment risks are evaluated and monitored. This will involve the use of appropriate investigative and analytical tools to increase information and provide appropriate input around investment decision making and will be reflected in regular reporting and assurance provided to the RCBPF.

4 Local Pension Partnership Investments – approach to RI

- 4.1 Whilst the RCBPF's newly agreed RI policy identifies climate change as a core priority, it is worthwhile noting what the LPPI says about climate change and how it is addressing this important issue.
- 4.2 The LPPI recognises that that RI is an area of growing interest for its stakeholders and, in response, has started to produce an annual RI report to supplement the LPP's Annual Report and Accounts.
- 4.3 The first of LPPI's Responsible Investment Reports was for 2019/20 in which one of the priority themes was climate change. One of the target outcomes included in the report is the alignment of voting and engagement activity with the achievement of targets under the [Paris Agreement](#).
- 4.4 As part of the analysis of their Global Equities Fund the LPPI measures carbon intensity on an annual basis. This is linked with indicative modelling of how this relates to the pathways for different global temperature scenarios. The position of the GEF in 2019 shows an improvement (reduction) when compared to 2018 and the

Response to referred Place Motions

results show the portfolio has emissions aligned with a pathway for 1.5°C. If this continues it will be in line with the Paris Agreement.

- 4.5 Further information about how the LPPI addresses climate change can be found within its [Responsible Investment Report 2019/20](#).

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 West Berkshire Council as a participant employer of the RCBPF is keen to ensure that investments made in relation to employee pensions reflect the importance of addressing climate change and the transition to a low-carbon world. This helps to ensure these activities are aligned with the [Environment Strategy](#) for West Berkshire and the Council's declaration of a climate emergency.
- 5.2 The Council welcomes the more proactive approach set out in the Responsible Investment Policy agreed by the Berkshire Pension Fund Committee in March 2021. This policy guides the fund to engage more closely with invested companies seeking evidence that they are planning for the transition to a low-carbon economy and working to meet future emissions reduction targets under the Paris Agreement. The policy also ensures that there will be no new investments in fossil fuel companies which are ignoring the risks of climate change.
- 5.3 The Council acknowledges and supports the principle that the Responsible Investment Policy should be reviewed regularly in order to continue recognising and reflecting best practice and addressing emerging priorities and changing situations.

Councillor Details:

Name: Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter
Job Title: Executive Member for Environment
E-mail Address: Steve.Ardagh-Walter@westberks.gov.uk
Date: 9th April 2021

High Street Canopies

Motion proposed by: Cllr Adrian Abbs

Date of Full Council Meeting: 6th October 2022

Date(s) considered by EAG: November 2022

Full Motion Wording

MOTION: The following Motion was submitted in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs:

“Given the constant temperature rises seen year on year (especially in the summer months) it is becoming critical to protect both ourselves and our economy by providing shade for humans, business and wildlife.

Therefore:

This Council notes:

- That Climate change is leading to higher temperatures.
- That Green Canopy cover can help significantly with providing shade.
- That Newbury Town Council have passed a motion asking for WBC assistance to achieve this.
- That some trees that existed previously are missing.
- That some trees are showing signs of stress due to either their location, care regime, or age.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Approach interested parties (such as Parish and Town councils as well as bodies such as Newbury BID) to gauge their willingness to be involved in a rapid roll out of Green Canopies on their high streets.
2. Commit to beginning a program of investigation on various methods of achieving green canopies that could be applied to the various scenarios that will be found in West Berkshire.
3. Commit to replacing any existing missing trees such as the one on Newbury High Street.
4. Undertake a quick survey of all trees to ascertain their current condition.
5. Create a forward plan for any tree identified as needing attention”.

Background

The presence of trees in town centres brings many benefits – visual, wellbeing, shade, carbon sequestration – to name a few. However, it is not a straightforward exercise to establish trees in these environments or to maintain them. A range of approaches have been used in the past with varying degrees of success.

Response to the Motion

The motion was considered by the Environment Advisory Group in November 2022 where the Council's Countryside Manager was present to help inform the discussion.

The conclusion from EAG was that there was agreement in principle that trees are a positive feature in town centres and that they help our town centres to be more resilient to climate change and air pollution. There was an acknowledgement that there are a range of issues involved with establishing trees in town centres and the solutions are therefore not obvious or quick.

It was agreed at EAG that the Countryside Manager would review the actions proposed in the motion with colleagues. Information from previous work would be included and a response drafted ready to be reported to the Executive.

A response to each of the five points from the motion is therefore set out below for Members to consider:

1. Approach interested parties (such as Parish and Town councils as well as bodies such as Newbury BID) to gauge their willingness to be involved in a rapid roll out of Green Canopies on their high streets.

It is agreed that any consideration of introducing new trees in town centres should include the Council working with Parish and Town Councils and other relevant local organisations who know their areas the best. However, expectations need to be managed and any mention of rapid roll out of trees is not appropriate. Retro-fitting trees in high streets is not something we can roll out in a short timescale. There are a number of issues around this which Officers have learnt over the years through various attempts and investigations into the provision of trees in main urban streets. Some of these issues are set out below:

- The reason Newbury's main town centre street is devoid of trees apart from a very few is because of the presence of underground services, drains and other pipework. The tree root ball needs space to grow and so you need a much bigger space than might be realised at first.
- Planters may be an option but there have been a number of relevant complaints from those who have a disability (mainly physical and sight impairments) about the issues planters can cause. The previous trees in planters idea, which came to fruition, was eventually abandoned. The planters tend to become unsightly and used for purposes other than for supporting tree growth.
- The roots of street trees can cause the cracking of roads and pavements and sometimes water pipes. Urban trees can also cause structural damage to buildings, including at foundation level due to their roots. Such problems can be minimised by careful species choice and maintenance, and through correct planting methods that determine the optimal location for a species and ensure sufficient space for root ball expansion. Aphid and pigeon droppings and leaves may also cause issues although this alone is no reason not to plant trees.

Officers have also previously sought advice from professional arboriculture bodies which have stated that:

Response to referred Place Motions

- Site conditions must be appropriate for the trees that are to be planted. Trees that are likely to experience stress or disease as a result of climate change should be avoided. Trees should be selected for their ability to adapt to very warm, and cold conditions, and a changing climate where summers can be baking.
- Trees or shrubs should be planted in a way that does not cause an obstruction to highways, footpaths or public right of way. Trees should not affect occupants of neighbouring buildings. In Newbury Town centre some above shop front accommodation is rented.
- The trees' roots can cause damage to foundations or drainage of buildings when planted too close and it may be more appropriate to consider planting a wall shrub or climber in such situations
- Ensure there is sufficient room for trees to develop and grow. The position of overhead wires, proximity to walls, windows and roofs and future maintenance requirements should be considered.

2. Commit to beginning a program of investigation on various methods of achieving green canopies that could be applied to the various scenarios that will be found in West Berkshire.

As indicated in the response to point 1 above, there has been a lot of investigation in the past around different ways of delivering trees in urban areas. Many lessons have been learnt from this and any proposals for urban trees are considered very carefully in the light of the knowledge that has been built up.

Officers are aware that new ideas can be developed and trialled at any time and aim to keep informed of progress in this area. For example, there are now a greater range of planter solutions. Some interesting examples can be fitted as part of a full shrub and tree planting display rather than individual planters. These are much less likely to become a hazard to disabled users and can form part of a seating area with disabled access. They do, however, require a larger amount of space for implementation so are only suitable in certain scenarios.

The most recent new trees to be planted in Newbury town centre are close to the bus station. The original aspiration for this scheme was for a greater number of trees but, due to the complex issues of adding trees to urban environments and the costs involved, a final number of 9 trees were planted. This is an example where an opportunity for new street trees was taken and the best possible outcome delivered in this environment. Such opportunities will continue to be considered and the best methods used for each scenario. It is not considered necessary to begin a new programme of investigation.

3. Commit to replacing any existing missing trees such as the one on Newbury High Street.

It is agreed that any missing trees should be replaced wherever possible. The one on Northbrook Street that is referred to was close to the Camp Hopson store and this has been replaced. Its health is being monitored regularly.

4. Undertake a quick survey of all trees to ascertain their current condition.

Response to referred Place Motions

Officers deliver a proactive tree survey that runs on a rolling programme. This survey sees all trees (not just urban trees) surveyed over a 18-24 month period.

5. Create a forward plan for any tree identified as needing attention.

Any issues identified through the tree survey programme mentioned above are collated, prioritised and actioned.

Recommended overall response and any recommended actions

Many elements of the actions this motion is seeking are already underway or covered by business as usual activities within the Countryside Team. It is not considered necessary to embark upon a new investigation of methods of creating tree canopy cover when there is already a lot of knowledge held by the team following previous work. Whilst working with local organisations on opportunities for tree planting is agreed as a good approach, reference to rapid roll-out of a scheme of planting is not appropriate given the difficulties outlined in this response.

It is therefore recommended that the motion is not supported.

Officers will continue to consider opportunities for increasing trees in urban areas where it is appropriate and possible to do so. It is also acknowledged that additional funding for urban trees was agreed at Full Council on 2 March 2023. This will contribute to the Countryside Team being able to take up opportunities for delivering these projects.

Domestic Energy Efficiency

Motion proposed by: Cllr Adrian Abbs

Date of Full Council Meeting: 1st December 2022

Date(s) considered by EAG: November 2022

Full Motion Wording

MOTION: The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs:

Overview:-

Council acknowledges that people living in poorly insulated suffer from significantly higher heating bills per sqm and are amongst the highest CO2 contributors from a heating perspective

This motion commits West Berkshire Council to take a bold step in helping as many residents as possible and as rapidly as possible to have a positive impact on energy needs next winter.

Council notes:

- That we declared a climate emergency across the district, and we need to make progress on our district target as a matter of urgency.
- That the better a property is insulated the lower the need for any kind of heating.
- That for any insulation scheme, there will be a shortage of skills needed to implement the scheme.
- That many believe the costs of fossil fuel will not return fully to previous levels for many years, if ever.
- That better insulation is one of the best ways to jump up from a poor EPC rating.
- That we can learn from the government's current Sustainable Warmth initiative which comes to an end in March 2023
- That by having our own scheme we can more directly target relevant residents of West Berkshire.

In order to help:

This Council will introduce a scheme which will begin by focusing on those who cannot afford to undertake basic insulation, or lack the skills, or physical ability to do it. The intent for the scheme would be to allow council to undertake a long-term program which would help towards our enabling of net zero by 2030 for the district.

Criteria that should be met:

- Living in a home or flat that has an EPC of D or below;

Response to referred Place Motions

- Can demonstrate to the Council that they are not in a position to:
 - Afford the simple steps to better insulation, in which case material will be supplied;
 - Afford the simple steps to better insulation and don't have the skills to implement. In which case, materials will be provided and a suitable course made available for them to gain the skills;
 - Afford the simple steps to better insulation and don't have the physical ability to undertake the work, in which case, the material would be provided, and work carried out for them.

THE MOTION

This council commits to:

- Presenting a scheme to council a.s.a.p in order to be able to take advantage of funds like the Household Support Fund which we expect to get further funding from.
- Officers developing details for a scheme to be considered by the Environment Advisory Group at their next meeting, leading to presenting to the Executive for a decision.
- Officers Identifying
 - homes that meets the affordability and physical ability criteria.
 - homes that meets the supply and training criteria.
 - Homes that meet the supply only criteria.
- Officers to investigate creating a directory of local tradespeople who will participate in the implementation of the scheme.
- Officers to work with local education facilities (such as Newbury Collage) to ensure the suitable availability of short courses for those wanting to skill-up.
- Officers to present costs for such courses that will need to be funded
- Ensuring those that have the greatest need are helped first.
- Working with both the public and private sectors to ensure anyone meeting the criteria can take advantage of the scheme (no matter who owns the property).
- Applying for complete funding from government to fund the project.
- Investigating the creation of a WBC Insulation Bond that would act as a backstop or allow for the extension of the programme dependant on the success of the grant bid
- Approaching Greenham Trust to support WBC in this program with whatever match funding they could make available
- Investigate other funding sources as the scheme develops

Background

The idea of this motion was brought to the attention of the Environment Advisory Group prior to it being formally submitted as a motion to Full Council in December 2022. This provided the opportunity for EAG to consider the detail and have a discussion about how this could be progressed. This was considered to be a positive process gaining support from Members. A small cross-party sub-group of EAG then met to develop the detailed wording of the motion so that it was likely to be considered acceptable and supported.

Response to referred Place Motions

The wording of the motion that appears in the formal papers of the Full Council meeting (1st December 2022) is not the final wording of the motion that was agreed by the EAG Sub-Group. The latest version that was proposed to be considered by Full Council is set out above and it is this wording that is being commented on in this paper.

Response to the motion

There was general support for the motion when it was considered at EAG. Officers noted that there were similar schemes to help improve energy efficiency for eligible homes with funding from government. These had been incredibly difficult to implement due to the near impossible timeframes that were stipulated for the use of the funding. If the Council had its own project funded by local funding sources such household energy efficiency improvements could be made without the need for timescales getting in the way of successful delivery. Officers also cautioned that such a project would need to be properly resourced. On a similar theme some Members noted that the difficulty in implementing such a project should not be underestimated.

EAG agreed that the motion should maintain cross-party support, and would be redrafted ahead of the next Council meeting.

Expectations and timescales were a key element of the re-drafting as the Officer team most suited to taking this forward had a vacancy that was proving difficult to fill. No work on this could be started until the Energy and Carbon Team was back up to full strength. Some additional resource may be needed to scope out the project and this would include indicating the level of resource required to implement any scheme that was considered deliverable for West Berkshire.

Recommended overall response and any recommended actions

Due to the amount of detail in the wording of the motion and the lack of resource that has been available to consider this detail to date, it is difficult to either confirm support for the motion or reject it at this stage.

It is therefore recommended that when the Energy and Carbon Team are up to full strength, the scoping of this project will start and an initial feasibility study carried out. A further recommendation will then be made to the Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Environment Advisory Group considering the details of a possible project with a particular focus on funding, resources and deliverability.

Appendix H

Pedestrianisation of Northbrook Street and Market Place, Newbury (extended hours)

Motion proposed by: Cllr Jeff Brooks

Date of Full Council Meeting: 8th July 2021

Date(s) considered by Economic Development Board: August 2021

Full Motion Wording

MOTION: The following Motion was submitted in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks:

“In order to assist the regeneration of the Newbury evening economy and provide support to hospitality businesses, including cafes, restaurants and pubs, this Council resolves to:

- Introduce extended hours pedestrianisation of Northbrook Street and the Market Place with the utmost haste – with pedestrianisation lasting from 10.00 hours to 24.00 hours every day of the week.
- This will give time between 00.00 hours to 10.00 hours for store deliveries with emergency vehicles having the ability to enter at any time by lowering the street barriers.
- By such rapid measures, hospitality businesses will be able to take advantage of the longer summer evenings and extend their premises across pavements and outside areas.
- Only by taking this decision this evening and implementing it with proper speed, will the Council be able to make a difference to this key economic sector in this summer.”

Background

The purpose of this appendix is to brief the Executive on what has been done to consider the proposal of extended hours of pedestrianisation of Northbrook Street and Market Place in Newbury town centre, in response to the motion raised by Councillor Jeff Brooks. This is the second Executive report that has been drafted on this issue, following one written by the Network Manager (Highways) for Executive on 17th December 2020.

The Network Manager’s report from 2020 summarised the work that would need to be done, and associated cost, of undertaking a feasibility study and implementing full pedestrianisation of Newbury Town Centre. This was written as a response to a motion raised in September 2020. The report considered traffic measures and estimated cost for traffic modelling work. It concluded that it is not appropriate to re-implement a temporary “24/7” pedestrianisation using the same legislation as previously (Covid19 measure). The report confirmed that the issue of permanent pedestrianisation is complex and there is a need for further consultation with the community and assessment of the practicalities of any proposed changes before proceeding to the statutory advertisement of a new Traffic Regulation Order. The report summarised that some public engagement had been done by the Newbury Weekly News,

Response to referred Place Motions

Newbury Town Council and Newbury Business Improvement District in the form of surveys; but it was limited in scope with a mixed response.

Response to the Motion

The motion that was brought by Councillor Jeff Brooks to Full Council on 8th July 2021 as detailed above was discussed at Economic Development Board on 12th August 2021, where it was noted as follows:

- That the Newbury BID survey was evenly split on pedestrianisation but it only surveyed town centre businesses, not other stakeholders such as taxi drivers.
- The Newbury Masterplan by Hemingway Design indicated public support for pedestrianisation.
- The Highways team were looking at the traffic implications.
- Concluded that West Berkshire Council is open to the idea of pedestrianisation and is awaiting the outcome of the Newbury Vision work.

The Newbury Masterplan includes proposals to increase pedestrianisation in Northbrook Street and Market Place in Newbury town centre, identified as one of key areas for public realm improvement. The Newbury Masterplan is currently being taken forward as a whole programme, consisting of the projects in the Masterplan which will be prioritised and developed in detail with the support of local stakeholders, leading bids for funding to implement projects.

Recommended overall response and any recommended actions

It is recommended that further investigation of the pedestrianisation proposal will be included as a workstream in the Newbury Masterplan delivery programme, which is being developed currently and will include further engagement with stakeholders in the town centre.

As a workstream in the Newbury Masterplan delivery programme the proposal will be compared against other projects in the town centre for prioritisation, and discussed with a stakeholder steering group. Ultimately any further action will be determined by Economic Development Board which is the governance board for the programme (or alternative appropriate internal governance body).

In summary, the measures proposed in Councillor Jeff Brook's Motion are not proposed to be implemented, at least in the short term. Instead they will be considered in more detail as part of the Newbury Masterplan delivery programme – including further engagement with stakeholders.