

DRAFT

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

EXECUTIVE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 23 MARCH 2023

Councillors Present: Lynne Doherty (Chairman), Steve Ardagh-Walter, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Thomas Marino, Richard Somner and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Councillors Lee Dillon, Adrian Abbs, Alan Macro, Erik Pattenden and Tony Vickers

Members and Officers Present Remotely: Councillor Carlyne Culver, Joseph Holmes (Executive Director – Resources)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Jo Stewart and Jeff Brooks

Officers Present: Paul Coe (Interim Executive Director- People), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director – Place), Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer) Lizzie Reeves (Project Manager - MC, OS) and Nicola Thomas (Service Lead – Legal & Democratic)

PART I

94. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Jo Stewart, and Jeff Brooks.

95. Opening Statement and Minutes

Councillor Lynn Doherty invited Councillor Richard Somner to make a statement, which was felt to be in the interests of West Berkshire residents.

Councillor Somner commented that he wished to make a statement about the Planning Service, noting the level of frustration with the service in the past that had been aimed both at the service and, in some instances, at individual officers.

Councillor Somner highlighted a number of objectives that had been set; to improve both internal and external communications, improve the culture of the service, to improve the performance and speed in processing planning applications and to increase the efficiency and transparency of the CIL process.

Councillor Somner reported that progress had been made against all of the objectives.

Councillor Somner noted that the Local Plan was close to being submitted, and that since consultation had closed in early March officers had reviewed, categorised and summarised 700 representations containing approximately 1,700 individual comments on policies. It was noted that these achievements had been secured against a backdrop of an ever changing national planning policy, requiring a high level of dedication from officers.

Councillor Somner noted that there was still work to do and that further enhancements were planned, including a dedicated planning customer charter. Officers would also be undertaking a further review of the community infrastructure levy from a customer perspective. A comprehensive training programme was also being developed which would be offered to both district, and town and parish councillors.

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

Councillor Somner reported that planning committees would move to a monthly basis which would provide certainty and regularity for residents.

It was reported that there was a concerted drive to recruit permanent staff and less consultants and to further digitalise the department.

Councillor Somner expressed his gratitude to the communities and stakeholders that had contributed to the process, and the tireless dedication and work of officers and fellow councillors in creating the Council's new Local Plan.

Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

96. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Howard Woollaston, Richard Somner and Eric Pattenden declared an interest in Agenda Item 8, as members of BBOWT, Tony Vickers declared an interest as a member of a local access forum referred to in Agenda Items 8 and 9, and Councillor Adrian Abbs declared an interest in Agenda Item 8 as a member of Greenham Parish Council, but all reported that, as their interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, they determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

97. **Public Questions**

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

98. **Petitions**

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

99. **Local Transport Plan Consultation (EX4337)**

Councillor Richard Somner introduced the report (Agenda Item 6), which provided an update on the recent Local Transport Plan Consultation.

Councillor Tony Vickers referred to a recent government budget which had announced 70% cuts to funding for the cycling and walking strategy and queried what the impact of this would be on the Council's Local Transport Plan.

Councillor Vickers further commented that there were a number of people that were unable to access services digitally and that it needed to be reflected within the Local Transport Plan.

Councillor Somner, commented that he was expecting details of active travel funding to be available in May.

Councillor Somner commented that his interpretation of paragraph 5.4 of the report was that less people were travelling to work but noted Councillor Vickers concerns and agreed that they would be taken into consideration as the plan progressed.

RESOLVED that: the Executive note the report and the recent consultation that has taken place to help shape the future of travel and transport across the District.

100. **Thatcham and Hungerford Town Centre Strategies (EX4325)**

Councillor Lynne Doherty introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 7), noting that the recommendation was in error and that it was for Executive to approve the paper rather than Council.

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter welcomed the report, particularly the strategy for Thatcham and the suggestion to move the library to the town centre.

Councillor Lee Dillon queried whether the change of recommendation may have impacted the substantive nature of the report and the public's inclination to respond. The Deputy Monitoring Officer commented that the report was clear on what the Executive was being asked to consider and consequently the public was not being misled.

Councillor Dillon welcomed the report and noted that the strategy for Thatcham suggested a community centre in the heart of the town. He stated that Thatcham Town Council had purchased a building in 2009 from West Berkshire Council in order to deliver such a centre. Councillor Doherty responded that the strategy contained a broad range of proposals which required further consultation prior to any decisions being made.

Councillor Doherty further commented that retail had changed significantly since 2009 and that the report showed the Council's progressive nature in responding to such change by recognising that the high street would need to adapt to remain attractive to consumers.

Councillor Dillon commented that there needed to be more consultation.

Councillor Tony Vickers commented that had he known that the report would be decided that evening his party may have decided to call it in and would have looked at the details more carefully. Councillor Vickers welcomed the report but stated that the Hungerford neighbourhood plan steering group had not been consulted as part of the Strategy. Councillor Doherty commented that there had been a dedicated member session to allow full scrutiny of the paper and that the consultation had been widely publicised.

Councillor James Cole reported that he had been with members of the Hungerford neighbourhood plan that day and that they had been fully aware of the strategy. From the perspective of Hungerford, Councillor Cole welcomed the report and hoped that strategy would be approved and progressed.

Councillor Richard Somner seconded the report and hoped that the residents of both Hungerford and Thatcham would rapidly start to see the benefits stemming from them.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Endorse both Town Centre Strategies for Thatcham and Hungerford in order to protect and enhance their economic vitality in order to meet the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors; and
- Seek to take forward the delivery of the Strategies in partnership with key stakeholders.

101. **Renewal of the BBOWT partnership for Countryside Management (EX4313)**

Councillor Richard Somner introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 8), which set out the current arrangement that the Council had with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), and sought approval for continuation of the partnership for a further ten years.

Councillor Tony Vickers noted that whilst he supported the work of BBOWT, their priority was conservation rather than public access. In relation to Appendix 1, Councillor Vickers requested greater provision of mobility scooters in local parks. Councillor Somner did not think that public access was detailed within the contract, however agreed that Officers would discuss with BBOWT.

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

Whilst acknowledging that BBOWT's priority was conservation, Councillor Adrian Abbs commented that Greenham Common attracted significant public access and that BBOWT needed to reflect the public's desires as well as the welfare of wildlife. Councillor Abbs suggested the addition of key performance indicators (KPI's) to the contract to achieve more of a balance.

Councillor Dominic Boeck, as an ex member of the Greenham and Crookham Common Commission stated that there was a need to balance often conflicting interests of the commoners and grazers rights, with public access and the requirement in law to preserve the common in its historic state.

Councillor Dillon highlighted the improvements made at Thatcham Nature Reserve and suggested that it may be a location for the introduction of mobility scooters.

Councillor Dillon noted the KPIs set by BBOWT and queried how they intended to improve their target of reserves rich in wildness from 87% to the set target of 95%. Councillor Somner agreed to take the matter forward with BBOWT.

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter noted the conflict between human access and wildlife interaction but welcomed the improvements to wildlife assets that BBOWT would have over the forthcoming years and seconded the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED that: Executive resolves to

- Approve the continuation of the current partnership arrangement with BBOWT for a further 10 years from the 1 April 2024 until the 31 March 2034; and
- Delegate authority to the Service Lead (Legal and Democratic Services) in consultation with the Service Director (Environment) to negotiate and make amendments to the agreement with BBOWT.

102. **Response to Referred Place Motions (EX4327)**

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 9), and apologised to all members of the Council due to the age of some of the motions detailed within the report. Councillor Ardagh-Walter reported that Officers were developing a better process for responding to motions to ensure swifter conclusion in the future.

Councillor Lynne Doherty commented that the Monitoring Officer had set up a central monitoring system to ensure that motions would be dealt with fairly and swiftly in the future.

Councillor Graham Bridgman commented that the booking system at local refuse centres was working very well and efficiently.

Councillor Lee Dillon requested a list of those actions that had been adopted by the Council. Councillor Ardagh-Walter clarified that a detailed analysis was within the Appendices to the report.

Councillor Tony Vickers disagreed with the response to his public funds for public access motion which stated that there was no immediate need as things had moved on. Councillor Vickers commented that the campaign needed to continue.

Councillor Adrian Abbs referred to use of the recycling centres and suggested a two tier system for those that wished to continue booking and those that wanted to visit without booking in advance.

Councillor Abbs referred to the recent decision at Council to approve the motion presented by the Green group for urban trees, as opposed to the decision in the paper to reject his high street canopy motion, and suggested that the administration were playing

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

at politics. Councillor Ardagh-Walter commented that there was a definite distinction between high street canopies and urban trees and that they were two different proposals.

The Leader ejected Councillor Abbs from the meeting due to rude, disrespectful behaviour, for repeatedly interrupting Councillor Ardagh-Walter. The meeting adjourned for five minutes.

Upon resumption the Leader apologised to all Members and those members of the public watching who had witnessed Councillor Abbs' behaviour. The deputy monitoring officer read section 5.14.1 and 5.14.2 of the Council's constitution which explained the powers which had allowed for Councillor Abbs' ejection. Councillor Dillon commented that the powers had not been invoked in the correct procedural manner and that in the future Officers should correctly inform the Leader in order to follow the formal process.

Councillor Erik Pattenden queried how long it should generally take to respond to a motion and whether there were any set targets. Councillor Ardagh-Walter suggested that there was no defined period and that all motions would vary depending upon their complexity. He accepted however that a target for initial response with an indication of likely timescale would be useful.

Councillor Richard Somner shared Councillor Ardagh-Walter's concerns in relation to delays in responding to motions and referred to the sprinklers motion submitted by Councillor Tony Linden. Councillor Somner seconded the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED that: Executive agree the below 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.
Cllr Carolyne Culver	Declare an ecological emergency See Appendix C for full details	The motion is rejected However, the aim of reversing the decline in biodiversity is supported	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
Cllr Carolyne Culver	Response to COP26 in Glasgow See Appendices D and E for full details	The motion is rejected. However, a number of the proposals have been taken forward by the Council.	i) Alok Sharma MP be invited to speak to the Environment Advisory Group now that he is not so busy with COP business. 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.
Cllr Adrian Abbs	High Street Canopies See Appendix F for full details	The motion is rejected A number of the proposals are already covered by BAU activities	Officers will continue to consider opportunities for increasing trees in urban areas where it is appropriate and

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

			possible to do so and make use of additional funds agreed at Full Council on 2 March 2023
Cllr Adrian Abbs	Domestic Energy Efficiency See Appendix G for full details	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.	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.
Cllr Jeff Brooks	Pedestrianisation of Northbrook Street and Market Place, Newbury (extended hours) See Appendix H for full details	The proposals in the motion will be considered as part of the wider Newbury Masterplan delivery programme	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.

103. Motion to Council - Defibrillators (EX4329)

Councillor Graham Bridgman introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 10), explaining that he was presenting it in his capacity as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Councillor Bridgman apologised for the delay in producing the report, explaining that the original motion had been presented to Council on 8 July 2021 where it had been decided that it should return with a response to Executive, via the Health and Wellbeing Board. The motion was heard at the meeting of 30 September 2021 where it was agreed that a detailed investigation would be undertaken concentrating on seven proposed actions relating to defibrillators and their use within telephone boxes. The report was presented to the May 2022 meeting providing a detailed response and suggestions. At that meeting the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed a series of proposals and actions. Councillor Bridgman explained that the report was now being presented to Executive to note and endorse the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board had undertaken in relation to the motion.

Councillor Lee Dillon thanked Councillor Bridgman for the response and the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and noted that Members should encourage parish councils to submit more bids to fund the installation of defibrillators.

RESOLVED that: Executive agrees to

- Community proposals for the installation of new defibrillator sites will continue to be supported through the Members' bids programme, and that these will be assessed in terms of:
 - Proximity to other sites, with proposals rejected if they are within 100m of an existing open access defibrillator;
 - Confirmation that: new open access defibrillators will be registered on the national database, and that provision is made for on-going maintenance checks, and replacement of the unit when life-expired; and
 - Provision is made by the applicant for community training on how to use the device.
- The Council should not take a default position of adopting all phone boxes for use as open access defibrillator locations for the reasons outlined in the report.

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

104. **Achievements and Progress Report - West Berkshire Council Strategy 2019-2023 (EX4342)**

Councillor Lynne Doherty introduced the report (Agenda Item 11), which detailed the achievements and progress of the West Berkshire Council Strategy 2019-202. Councillor Doherty commented that it was important to reflect on the plan and achievements made by the current Council in adopting and following the plan. Councillor Doherty highlighted the work that had been undertaken by Children and Family Services, which had managed to maintain a high standard even throughout the Covid pandemic. Councillor Doherty further praised the work that had been done to support businesses throughout the pandemic.

Councillor Richard Somner commented that he was proud of the support, dedication and commitment of the officers within his Portfolio of Place, and welcomed the report.

Councillor Dominic Boeck reflected on the good job that the Council was doing in relation to education and schools, with 90% of children being admitted to schools of their parents' choice and 94 % of those schools rated 'Good' or better. During the preceding four years the Council had opened two new schools, Theale Primary and Highwood Copse Primary School, and Councillor Boeck further noted that two SEN schools had received ratings of 'Outstanding', which he saw as a credit to the Council's investment and the quality of teaching. Councillor Boeck noted that Children and Family Services had received a 'Good' Ofsted rating in the preceding year and echoed Councillor Somner's thanks and praise to officers over the past four years and also to the Council's public and private partners for their support of the children and young people in West Berkshire.

Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter commented that he was delighted that the Council had made a really solid start in the relatively new service of environment. Councillor Ardagh-Walter noted that there was a huge amount still to do and was looking forward to continuing the drive forward and improving the environment of West Berkshire.

Councillor Lee Dillon noted that whilst Councillor Boeck had highlighted that 94% of the district's schools had been rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, the actual target set had been 95%. Further he drew attention to the roads citing that whilst it was only 3% of the road network that had been assessed as requiring repair, the target had been 2%.

Councillor Alan Macro noted that the Planning and Housing achievement and progress notes stated that determination of planning applications 'in a timely manner, [had] improved considerably over the first three years of the strategy', which was at odds with the 2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Three (Agenda Item 13), which stated that determination of planning applications had been 'impacted by staff recruitment challenges, additional process requirements and consultation responses' timescales. Further, Councillor Macro noted that the Council's website had a specific page entitled 'Planning Applications Backlog'.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Note the achievements in delivering the Council Strategy's core business and priorities for improvement covering the period 2019 – 2023, set out in Appendix B.

105. **West Berkshire Council Strategy 2023 - 2027 Consultation Feedback - Summary Report**

Councillor Lynne Doherty introduced the report (Agenda Item 12), noting that it was an early report that had been presented for Members to note the feedback received from the consultation on the Draft Council Strategy that would inform the updated final draft Council Strategy 2023-2027.

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Note the feedback received to the draft Council Strategy that will inform the updated final draft Council Strategy 2023-2027.
- Note the updated final draft Council Strategy 2023-2027 shall be considered for approval at the Council meeting in May 2023.

106. **2022/23 Performance Report Quarter Three (EX4291)**

Councillor Tom Marino introduced the report (Agenda Item 13), noting that indicators for the district showed that resilience in the economy and delivering core business activities had remained strong despite challenges.

Councillor Erik Pattenden referred to a chart on page 394 of the Agenda pack which showed the number of Children in Need and commented that the figure of 1,183 as at 31 December 2022 was almost double that of 627 for 31 December 2019. Councillor Pattenden noted that recruitment had been cited as a cause in previous reports and queried whether there were any other factors.

Councillor Dominic Boeck responded that the increase was as a consequence of recruitment and rising demand. Councillor Boeck suggested that life had become more complicated following Covid, with the interruption to education, cost of living crisis and unemployment which had led to complex conditions and an increase in cases which had then impacted an already difficult recruitment situation. Councillor Boeck commented that the Executive had supported officer requests for an improved recruitment and retention package and that plan was now in place with early signs of a positive response.

Councillor Alan Macro referred to a chart on page 397 of the Agenda pack titled 'Overall number of new requests for support (ASC)', and queried whether the chart displayed cumulative numbers. Paul Coe, Interim Executive Director for People confirmed that it was cumulative number and agreed that future reports would clarify the fact.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2019-2023, a maintained strong performance for the core business areas, good results for the majority of the measures relating to the council's priorities for improvement, and remedial actions taken where performance is below target.

107. **Statutory Consultation on Hackney Carriage Tariffs 2023 (EX4298)**

Councillor Tom Marino introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 14), noting that it was being brought to Executive earlier than preceding years at a request from the taxi trade to modify the tariffs and assist with their planning. It was noted that the Council would be consulting on an interior fouling charge of £100, rather than the £200 suggested by the trade.

Councillor Lee Dillon raised concern at the impact taxis had on the home based community when parked up and suggested that where the Council provided a taxi licence, it should also ensure that there was adequate overnight storage provision for that vehicle. Councillor Marino agreed to discuss the suggestion with officers.

Councillor Graham Bridgman commented that the paper had been thoroughly debated at Licensing Committee and that the relationship with the trade was greatly improved to previous years. Councillor Bridgman expressed disappointment in the legal advice that fares could not be split and suggested that the legislation be investigated further. Councillor Bridgman seconded the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED that: Executive

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

- **NOTES** the existing tariffs which have been in place since 29 July 2022 (Appendix A).
- **CONSIDERS** the proposed modifications from the Taxi Trade (Appendix B) and the outcome of the recent non-statutory consultation undertaken with the Taxi Trade as set out in Appendix C.
- **RESOLVES**, with the exception of the fouling charge, whether or not to make variations to the current table of fares for hackney carriage tariffs based on the proposals set out in Appendix B this report.
- **CONSIDERS** whether or not to include a fouling charge on the tariff card and if so **RESOLVES** that a £100 (interior) and £25 (exterior) charge be consulted on.

If the Executive decides to make any changes to the current table of fares they are asked to:

- **RESOLVE** that the period within which objections to the variation(s) can be made (the statutory consultation) will be the 11 May 2023 to the 25 May 2023 or a longer period determined at the meeting.
- **AGREE** that a public notice (akin to the one set out in Appendix D) will be placed in the Newbury Weekly News and the Reading Chronicle on the 11 May 2023.
- **AGREE** that the consultation will be promoted on the website and a note will be displayed at the Market Street Offices by the 11 May 2023.
- **AGREE** that a copy of the notice should be emailed individually to all West Berkshire licensed Hackney Carriage Proprietors for their comments.
- **NOTE** that if objections are received, and not withdrawn, the Executive at the 08 June 2023 meeting will consider the objections and determine whether the varied table of fares shall be modified or not, and set a date when the varied table of fares, with or without modification, will come into operation. The implementation date must be no later than two months after the period for objections closes.
- **NOTE** that if no objections are received, or if the objections are withdrawn, the varied table of fares will come into effect on the day after the statutory consultation closes.
- **NOTE** that the outcome of the statutory consultation and any subsequent decisions of the Executive will be reported back to the July meeting of the Licensing Committee.

108. **Newbury Sports Hub - revised costs and seeking permission to sign Development Management Agreement (EX4332)**

Councillor Howard Woollaston introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 15), stating that advice from Legal Services was that the risk of a judicial review was now so remote that it was appropriate to agree to start work on the Sports Hub.

Further, it was clarified that there was current cost certainty for the project only until May, making commencement of the project crucial.

Councillor Lee Dillon commented that it had been bought to his group's decision that day that legal proceedings had been filed with the council in relation to requesting leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal, and requested officer confirmation. Councillor Lynne Doherty clarified that the notice of appeal had not been served.

Councillor Dillon anticipated that it would be served in the forthcoming days and estimated an ensuing delay to the project of two months. Councillor Dillon suggested that it would be prudent to await the conclusion of the legal proceedings prior to agreeing commencement of the work. Councillor Doherty noted that this was clarified on page 434 of the agenda pack under the Legal Implications section.

Councillor Dillon queried how much more the Executive was willing to pay should the project be further delayed and costs increase. Councillor Woollaston responded that the

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

Executive were very committed to the project and anticipated that it would be a great facility for Newbury and West Berkshire.

Councillor Erik Pattenden queried whether a greater contingency should have been put aside given the contentious nature of the project. Councillor Woollaston responded that he did not feel that anyone could have foreseen the legal issues that had arisen.

Councillor Doherty commented that the football community genuinely just wanted to play football and to find a solution and that location was not an issue, with only a narrow subsection opposing the Monks Lane site. Councillor Doherty seconded the recommendations within the report and noted that it had a lot of local support.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Approve the allocation of £3.878M to complete the development of Newbury Sports Hub and thereby achieve the delivery of the number one priority in the Playing Pitch Strategy and to give approval, subject to planning permission, for the signing of the Development Management Agreement with Alliance Leisure Services.
- In consultation with the Portfolio Member for Finance and Economic Development, the Executive Director of Resources is given delegated authority to approve additional costs arising in relation to this development up to a maximum of £250,000 above £3.878M.

109. **Contract Award for Leisure Management Contract (EX4221)**

Councillor Howard Woollaston introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 17), which sought approval to award the Leisure Management Contract following a tender process.

Councillor Lee Dillon noted that the Sports Hub was listed as a leisure site and queried whether the winner of the contract would be able to set the fees and charges for the Sports Hub. Councillor Woollaston confirmed that this was correct and that this contained within the current business case for the Sports Hub.

Councillor Alan Macro referred to section 6.2 of the report which proposed the opening of a new leisure centre and expressed hope that it would be located in the east of the district. Councillor Woollaston confirmed that this was the case.

Councillor Erik Pattenden queried the Council's exposure if the provider was unable to reach the income targets and the impact that this may have on the service levels of the contract. He further queried to what level maintenance had been held back over preceding years. Councillor Woollaston commented that there was a fixed price contract which was increased by inflation but that the risk would be taken by the contractor. Councillor Woollaston assured Councillor Pattenden that the contractor was very experienced and had undertaken a large amount of due diligence. Councillor Woollaston commented that the Council had not held back on maintenance duties over previous years and that the leisure centres would be transferred in as good condition as possible, albeit with three pending refurbishment.

Recommendation (Vote to be taken in Part II):

- Award the Leisure management contract to the successful bidder in consultation with the s151 Officer and the Portfolio holder for Housing, Leisure and Culture.
- Delegate authority to the Service Lead Legal & Democratic Services in consultation with the Interim Executive Director (People) to;
 - (a) finalise the terms of the agreement as set out in the tender documents and to make any necessary drafting or other amendments (such amendments shall not be

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

substantial or material) to the terms of the agreement necessary to produce a final agreement for execution and to enter into that agreement; and

(b) finalise and enter into appropriate leases and/or licences required for the operator's occupancy of each facility managed by the operator under the leisure contract.

110. **Contract Award - Building Maintenance Measured Term Contract (EX4294)**

Councillor Tom Marino introduced and proposed the report (Agenda Item 17), which sought approval to award the Building Maintenance Measured Term Contract, following a tender process.

Recommendation (Vote to be taken in Part II):

The Executive resolves to:

- Award the contract for the provision of building maintenance services to the successful bidder; and
- Delegate authority to Service Lead Legal & Democratic Services to finalise the terms of the contract as set out in the tender documents and to make any necessary drafting or other amendments to the terms of the contract which are necessary to reach final agreement but do not materially affect the intent and substance of the contract.

111. **Members' Questions**

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

112. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the under-mentioned item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as contained in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006. Rule 8.10.4 of the Constitution also refers.

113. **Contract Award for Leisure Management Contract (EX4221)**

(Paragraph 6 – information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 20), which sought approval to award the Leisure Management Contract.

RESOLVED that: the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Other options considered:

- Extension with the incumbent operator Parkwood Leisure – the current contract has been extended to the maximum allowed under the current terms.
- Officers utilised the Sport England facilities planning model tool to determine if the scale and location of West Berkshire's leisure centres were appropriate for the existing population and projected population growth up to 2036. The outcome of this was that the existing leisure centres are appropriately located to serve the needs of the population and the scale of provision was also appropriate. However the age of the existing stock was highlighted as an issue which could affect future demand. The planned capital investments are designed to help alleviate this issue. In the future the report advised that rationalising the service could provide benefits with the opening of

EXECUTIVE - 23 MARCH 2023 - MINUTES

a new leisure centre which could cover the catchment area of more than one of West Berkshire’s existing centres. The issue of identifying a location for a new leisure centre is highlighted for future consideration in the leisure strategy 2022-32.

- Closure of services – leisure centres are community hubs and participants utilise the services for social and health reasons. For older people, the social aspect is often of particular value and this was highlighted in the public consultation underpinning the leisure strategy. Additionally, leisure centres are homes for local sports clubs and the only venues where schools can meet their curriculum obligations to teach children to swim 25 metres and Key Stage 2. Any closure should be considered in the context of an Equality Impact Assessment.
- Bring service back in house – this would require a major restructure of the leisure team and result in a considerable increase in costs for core services such as HR, Payroll, ICT as more than c200 staff would be joining the Council.

114. Contract Award - Building Maintenance Measured Term Contract (EX4294)

(Paragraph 6 – information relating to proposed action to be taken by the Local Authority)

The Executive considered a report (Agenda Item 21), which sought Executive approval to award the Building Maintenance Measured Term Contract, following a tender process.

RESOLVED that: the recommendations in the exempt report be agreed.

Other options considered:

The existing arrangement for ad hoc commissioning of works does not provide the advantages of the proposed long term contract. Short term contracts are not recommended as a short term contract is unattractive to suppliers and are not advantageous to the Council as a short term contract provides no scope for suppliers to manage mobilisation costs.

(The meeting commenced at 5.00 pm and closed at 7.45 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature