

Item 21: Notices of Motion

Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 26 March 2024

- (a) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Justin Pemberton:**

Pets as Prizes

This Council notes that:

- *Animal ownership is a big responsibility, one that should be planned and well thought out. Animals – primarily goldfish, but also any other potential household pet – often do not have their welfare needs met both prior to, during and after being given as a prize, for example at fairs and other social events (licenced or otherwise).*
- *West Berkshire Council is to be applauded for having implemented a policy that precludes animals being given away as prizes on Council owned land, ensuring that the welfare of these animals is not compromised, as well as raising public awareness of the issue and leading the way on ending this outdated practice.*
- *The legislation in its current form is not fit for purpose and does not go far enough to ban (or otherwise address) a clearly outdated and barbaric practice.*
- *The Council should do all it can to promote good practice by urging the District's Town and Parish Councils to adopt our current policy of banning pets as prizes on land which they own and/or events which they manage.*

The Council therefore resolves:

- 1) *To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Chairpersons of all Town and Parish Councils across the district to notify them that the Council already bans outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on West Berkshire Council land and events run or managed by it, and asks them to consider adopting the same policy, standards and guidelines.*
- 2) *To write to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, urging that an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land be legislated for.*

- (b) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs:**

Bond Riverside – Culvert

Overview: -

This motion is design to help address key issue which has been blocking any form of development of what used to be called LRIE but was renamed to Bond Riverside.

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By acknowledging some of the fundamentals associated with how plans for any future development at Bond riverside are constrained by sustainable drainage issues.

Council Notes

- *That the findings from the LRIE scrutiny commission found contract control had been inadequate*
 - *The Culvert at Tesco was*
 - *designed for its time*
 - *Is not something that West Berkshire council (WBC) have direct control over*
- *That the environment agency (EA) is the responsible body for water passing through and downstream of the culvert*
- *That it is now exceptionally difficult to get agreement from the EA to allow increases in volumes of water to be passed downstream for manmade drainage reasons*
- *That sustainable drainage legislation is increasingly required to be dealt with on site*
- *That dredging the culvert has no effect due to the water table*
- *That BNG (Biodiversity Net Gain) is becoming much more important*
- *That there has been a cumulative effective up stream since the Culvert was created from development both past and present*

THE MOTION

This Council therefore commits to:

- *Enter Dialog with third parties, residents whose land is next to the Culvert*
- *To work towards a solution that takes into account historical and potential future development of Bond River and associated areas whose run off goes into the Culvert.*
- *That the council will create a critical path committee made up of key stakeholders whose focus is drainage issues associated with the Culvert.*
- *That the team will report back to the Council on findings associated with ideas and plans coming from the administration*

(c) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Alan Macro:

The Cost of Care

Council notes that:

- 1) *More and more councils are struggling to balance their budgets due to the soaring costs of social care.*

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- 2) *Funding from central government has been severely reduced by 60% since 2011 and council tax now funds over 60% of West Berkshire Council's budget. This is an untenable shift in financial responsibility.*
- 3) *Despite a 27 per cent real-terms reduction in core spending power for councils since 2010/11, children's social care budgets increased by £1.5 billion in the last year alone as councils fight to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.*
- 4) *In his first speech as Prime Minister in 2019, Boris Johnson stated that the Government would "fix the crisis in social care once and for all" but that promise has been broken. Since the General Election in 2019 there have been five Secretaries of State for Health and Social Care, none of whom have kept that promise.*
- 5) *This council is forecast to spend almost £92M on Adult Social Care in 2023/24. This equates to £1.76M per week, with the highest adult care package currently costing £7,025 per week.*
- 6) *West Berkshire Children and Family Services is forecast to spend £3.7M beyond its budget for Children's and Family Services in 2023/24. The increase is partly due to increasing costs of care packages and placements and also to the increasing numbers of children needing help. Some individual children's care packages are costing as much as £9,000 per week.*
- 7) *The number of children requiring Education and Health and Care Plans to meet their needs is increasing on a monthly basis. The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is forecasting a spend of £4.9M beyond its budget for 2024/25.*
- 8) *A recent Carers Trust survey noted that one-in-eight unpaid carers were caring for an extra 50 hours a week or more over the past year.*
- 9) *NHS organisations and charities have warned that the Government's newly announced ban on migrant care workers bringing dependents with them to the UK risks deepening the care sector's recruitment and retention crisis.*

Council believes that:

- a) *The proper provision of social care for children and adults is the hallmark of a civilised society and should be placed on an equal footing with NHS care and funded accordingly.*
- b) *The role of unpaid carers should be financially recognised and valued for the work that they do.*
- c) *A shift towards preventative social care is essential, ensuring individuals can remain in their homes longer and children and families receive early support tailored to their needs.*

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Council therefore resolves to:

To ask the CEO and the acting Leader of West Berkshire Council to write to the district's MPs asking them to:

- *Urge the Government to properly fund social care via national taxation rather than the regressive council tax which unfairly penalises people on lower incomes.*
- *Ask the Government to provide additional funding for adult and children's services, reducing demand, stabilising placements, and enhancing outcomes for children and families.*
- *Call on the Government to urgently reform carers allowance and to provide a package of support for unpaid carers.*
- *Call on the Government to reject any proposals to change visa rules for health and care workers that would reduce the number of care worker visas issued.*

(d) **The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Stuart Gourley:**

Thames Water Motion

Council notes that:

- *In the first weeks of March almost 3500 (of recorded) hours of raw sewage was discharged into waterways across West Berkshire from Thames Water foul water sewers*
- *Many Thames Water monitors were offline, these monitors are used to monitor storm discharge into our rivers and waterways leading to the full duration of sewage discharges into our water ways being unknown.*
- *The full impact felt by residents of West Berkshire due to Thames Water failing to maintain their infrastructure across the District has been extremely significant. The result of this infrastructure decline has been sewage floods into our roads and waterways, and in a wide range of houses, gardens, and businesses of West Berkshire residents.*
- *Many residents have had to live with the effects of foul water sewer flooding for over 3 months now, and not for the first time.*
- *Our rivers have had to cope with the effects of raw sewage discharges consistently for many, many months, and years.*
- *Council also recognises the critical work of volunteers, charities, flood forums and campaigners across West Berkshire, in supporting and improving the habitat of our waterways, and for campaigning for an end to sewage discharges into those waterways.*

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Council believes that:

- *The local environment, wildlife, and everyone who uses our rivers deserve the highest possible protection.*
- *The Government has reduced funding to the Environment Agency by 50% over the last 10 years. This Council believes that the Environment Agency needs to be properly funded to allow them to investigate and enforce action on water companies lack of investment in critical infrastructure, and to prevent these discharges into our waterways, and residents' properties.*
- *The levels of action by Thames Water to resolve short and long term issues are not enough and a lot more needs to be done, and done sooner.*

Council therefore resolves:

- *to ask the CEO, and the acting Leader of West Berkshire Council to write to the Thames Water CEO and demand for an action plan to be put in place across West Berkshire to resolve issues urgently across the area, and to set up a regular meeting with the Executive Director - Place, and relevant Service Directors, and Senior Thames Water Leadership to monitor, and track action in line with the urgency of each situation.*
- *to ask the CEO, and the acting Leader of West Berkshire Council to write to our MPs and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and demand an increase in funding for the Environment Agency in order to ensure that enforcement action can be taken where sewage spills are a regular and ongoing occurrence from water companies.*
- *to ask the CEO, and the acting Leader of West Berkshire Council to write to our MPs, and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and ask them to urge the Government to undertake a review of OFWAT to ensure that it is fit for purpose and also ensure that proper regulation of the water Industry is undertaken.*

(e) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Heather Codling:

Motion on support for Care Experienced People

Firstly the term 'care-experienced' refers to anyone who has been, or is currently, in care, or is from a looked-after background – at any stage in their life, no matter how short. This includes adopted children who were previously looked-after.

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Council notes that:

- *Care-experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives;*
- *Despite the resilience of many care-experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account;*
- *It recognises that care experienced people are a group who are likely to face discrimination and stigma across many areas of their lives including housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system;*
- *Care-experienced people may encounter inconsistent support in different geographical areas;*
- *As corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who are looked after by us as an authority;*
- *The Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, such as councils, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation of people with protected characteristics.*

Council believes that:

- *All corporate parents should commit to acting as mentors, hearing the voices of looked after children and young people and to consider their needs in any aspect of council work;*
- *Councillors should be champions of the children in our care and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society;*
- *Councils have a duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration.*

This Council therefore resolves to ask that Executive consider the following proposals to ensure that:

- *Future decisions, services and policies made and adopted by the Council should be assessed through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience, alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic.*
- *In the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty the Council includes care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a protected characteristic in services and employment.*
- *This Council will treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic.*

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- *The Council continues to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people when developing new policies.*

The Council also resolves:

- *To formally call upon all other bodies to treat care experience as a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation, and to adopt the corporate parenting principles.*