

DRAFT

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

EXECUTIVE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2026

Councillors Present: Jeff Brooks (Chairman), Patrick Clark, Heather Codling (Vice-Chairman), Nigel Foot, Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Tom McCann, Justin Pemberton and Vicky Poole

Also Present: Councillors Ross Mackinnon, Howard Woollaston, Richard Somner and David Marsh

Officers Present: Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Sarah Clarke (Executive Director – Resources), Paul Coe (Executive Director – Adult Social Care), Shannon Coleman-Slaughter (Service Lead – Financial, Reporting and Property), Joseph Holmes (Chief Executive), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director – Place), Sadie Owen (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Martyn Sargeant (Service Director – Strategy and Governance), Nicola Thomas (Service Lead – Legal and Democratic)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Iain Cottingham, Dominic Boeck and Jo Stewart, and AnnMarie Dodds

PART I

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2026 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Leader.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. Public Questions

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

4. Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the Executive.

5. Motion to Council: decisions following public consultation (EX4761)

Councillor Vicky Poole introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 7), which provided a response to a Motion submitted to Council on 16 October 2025, which proposed 'that where a decision is made contrary to the majority of residents' opinions via a public consultation, then an explanatory statement should be made explaining the reasons for doing so'.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon suggested that the specific information requested by the Motion, 'where a decision had been made in contravention of a consultation' was not currently published on the website by the Council.

Martyn Sargeant, Service Director for Strategy and Governance cautioned against referring to decisions being made 'in contravention' to a consultation and explained that consultations were undertaken in order to inform decisions and reported that where decisions had been modified further to consultation the website would now summarise that information accordingly. It was explained that a new page had been added to the

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website which provided a high-level summary detailing how the Council had proceeded with the decisions it had taken in the light of the consultation responses received. Each individual consultation page would include a more detailed explanation of what was originally proposed, what residents had said, and the ensuing outcome.

Councillor Mackinnon noted that the Executive's response to the Motion did not include an individual category for decisions that had been made 'not in accordance' with the public's wishes.

Councillor Jeff Brooks seconded the recommendations within the report and commented that each consultation page would contain narrative for the reason of each decision, and that was as far as the Executive was prepared to agree to the proposals set out in the Motion.

RESOLVED that:

- That the Executive is informed that The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require local authorities to provide a record of relevant decisions, the reasons for decisions and any options considered but rejected.
- That the Executive resolves to strengthen how the outcomes of consultations are reported through the Council's consultation database.

6. 2025/26 Performance Report Q3 (EX4712)

Councillor Vicky Poole introduced a report (Agenda Item 8), which provided assurance that the priority areas in the Council Strategy 2023-2027 were being managed effectively as at the end of the third quarter (December 2025), and where performance had fallen below the expected level, presented information on the remedial action taken and the impact of that action.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon noted that there were a number of red high priority measures and queried which Councillor Poole found most concerning. Councillor Poole responded that she would like all measures to be green but was particularly concerned with those relating to children (HP2 and HP4), and noted that of the two-year-olds accessing free childcare, most parents who had two-year-olds that were not accessing free childcare were typically stay-at-home parents.

Councillor Heather Codling commented that work was being undertaken through Family Hubs to encourage the uptake of nursery entitlement for 2-year-olds, and that providers were being assisted to increase capacity.

Councillor Mackinnon requested an update on the Grazeley Solar Farm project. Councillor Stuart Gourley commented that it was an important investment for the Council and consequently there was a need to ensure that the business case was robust.

Councillor Howard Woollaston referred to recent reporting by a local newspaper which indicated that the Council had abandoned the project and queried whether the assertion was true. Councillor Jeff Brooks categorically denied the statement and Councillor Gourley noted that the project remained within the budget and that due diligence was being undertaken to review the business case.

Councillor Brooks requested assurance relating to the Playing Pitch Strategy. Councillor Nigel Foot commented that the Strategy was scheduled on the forward plan with a report due at May's meeting of Executive.

Councillor Jeff Brooks stressed to the Chief Executive and Executive Directors that red measures needed to be reduced.

RESOLVED that: Executive

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- Note the progress made in delivering the Council Strategy Delivery Plan 2023-2027 priorities scheduled for this financial year.
- Review those areas where performance is below target i.e., reporting as 'Red' or 'Amber', and note that the appropriate remedial action is in place.
- Note an error in the previously reported target date for the High Priority measure HP18 Undertake a strategic asset review with associated disposal plan, which should read 31/03/26 not 31/01/26.

7. **Oral Health Needs Assessment Recommendation (EX4773)**

Councillor Patrick Clark introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 9), which provided a response to Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee recommendations related to oral public health

Councillor Ross Mackinnon commended the report.

Councillor Nigel Foot seconded the recommendation within the report and noted it should be viewed against the backdrop of the national picture. He noted that there was widespread difficulty in accessing affordable treatment on the National Health Service, and as Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board it was a topic that arose regularly on the work programme, and that he would monitor accordingly in order to deliver a good oral health programme for West Berkshire.

RESOLVED that: the Executive accepts the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee recommendation and commits to undertaking a rapid oral health needs assessment.

8. **Children's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing - Management Response to Task & Finish Group Recommendations (EX4740)**

The report was withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting.

Councillor Heather Codling commented that there she had requested withdrawal of the report due to several forthcoming government reforms which would affect the recommendations. In response to a query from Councillor Ross Mackinnon, Councillor Codling suggested that the report would be bought back hopefully, to the next meeting of Executive.

9. **Proposed development of a Resource Base at Victoria Park Nursery School, Newbury**

Councillor Heather Codling introduced and proposed a report (Agenda Item 10), which sought approval to develop an existing space at Victoria Park Nursery School into a SEND Resource Base, following the formal public consultation period, which ended on 25 February 2026.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon noted that the proposal had been under consideration for some time and queried why it had been brought to the meeting as an urgent item. Councillor Codling responded that the proposal had been subject to public consultation, and in order to meet the dates of the meeting calendar and the requirement to approve the decision within 60 days of the end of the consultation the report had required submission as an urgent item.

Councillor Justin Pemberton seconded the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED that: Executive

- Approves the proposal to repurpose an existing space (Family Hub) at the Victoria Park Nursery School site to establish a Resource Base that will support nursery-aged children in West Berkshire with additional needs.

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- Notes that the proposal supports the Council's SEND Sufficiency and Inclusion Strategy, delivering cost avoidance through reduced reliance on independent and out-of-area placements.
- Delegates authority to the Head of SEND, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education, to oversee the implementation and ongoing monitoring of the expanded provision.

10. Members' Questions

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

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 7.20 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature