

**AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Magnet Leisure Centre on Tuesday, 15th December, 2015**

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Eileen Quick), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Sayonara Luxton) and

Councillors Michael Airey, Natasha Airey, Malcolm Alexander, George Bathurst, Christine Bateson, Malcolm Beer, Hashim Bhatti, Phillip Bicknell, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, David Burbage, Stuart Carroll, Gerry Clark, John Collins, David Coppinger, Simon Dudley, Marius Gilmore, Jesse Grey, Geoff Hill, David Hilton, Maureen Hunt, Mohammed Ilyas, Lynne Jones, Richard Kellaway, John Lenton, Ross McWilliams, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Nicola Pryer, Jack Rankin, Colin Rayner, Samantha Rayner, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Hari Sharma, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John Story, Claire Stretton, Lisa Targowska, Leo Walters, Simon Werner, Derek Wilson, Edward Wilson and Lynda Yong

Officers: David Almond, Andrew Brooker, Chris Hilton, Christabel Shawcross, Simon Fletcher, David Scott, Anna Trott, Jessica Hosmer-Wright and Mark Shephard and Karen Shepherd.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carwyn Cox, David Evans, Dr Lilly Evans, Charles Hollingsworth, Andrew Jenner, Paul Lion, Philip Love and Asghar Majeed.

2. COUNCIL MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2015 be approved.**

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members noted that legal advice received had confirmed that no dispensation was required in relation to the item 'Members' Allowance Scheme – Full Review and Proposed Amendments'.

Councillor Dudley declared an interest in the item 'Petition for Debate' (Holyport College safe walking route) as the founder and Chair of Governors at the school. His wife was also a founder and governor.

Councillor Bicknell declared an interest in the item 'Petition for Debate' (Holyport College safe walking route) as his son was Director of Sport at the school.

Councillor Smith stated that he had no interest in the item 'Petition for Debate' (Holyport College safe walking route) but wished it to be recorded that his wife worked at the school in administration.

Councillor Smith stated that he had no interest in the item 'Petition for Debate' (RMRE) but wished it to be recorded that he was a substitute Member of the Maidenhead Development Control Panel. Councillors Kellaway, D. Wilson, Bullock, Clark, Dudley, Mrs Hunt, Ms Stretton and Walters declared the same interest as

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Members of the Maidenhead Development Control Panel. Councillors Brimacombe, Burbage, Carroll, Coppinger, Ilyas, Mrs Mills and Saunders declared the same interest as substitute Members of the Maidenhead Development Control Panel.

Councillors Burbage, Dudley, D. Wilson, Walters and M. Airey declared interests in the item 'Delegation of Planning Functions Within Bray Parish' as Members of Bray Parish Council.

#### 4. ORDER OF BUSINESS

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of business as detailed in the agenda be amended.**

#### 5. PETITION FOR DEBATE

An e-petition containing 552 signatories, accompanied by a paper petition containing over 500 signatures, was submitted to the council on 1 November 2015. In accordance with the provisions of the council's constitution, it was requested by the lead petitioner that the petition be reported to, and debated at, a full Council meeting. The petition read as follows:

*'We the undersigned petition The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to create a safe route to school for children that live within a mile of Holyport College'*

The petition was introduced by Simon Fletcher, the Strategic Director of Operations. Mr Fletcher explained that a petition had been created requesting that a safe route to Holyport College be established for children that live within a mile of the school giving them the choice to safely walk or cycle if they choose. Jane Brocklebank was the lead petitioner and he thanked her for her hard work and efforts in securing in 1,065 signatures supporting the request. Additionally, he understood that the request was supported by Bray Parish Council.

Due to the location of Holyport College a majority of access was by car or mini-bus with limited safe walking or cycle routes linking to the local area. In general terms, the Royal Borough promoted and encouraged walking and cycling to school and was supportive of creating routes which were deliverable and cost effective. Officers had reviewed the aims of the petition and undertaken an initial feasibility study which looked at creating a safe route from Holyport (to the north), from Touchen End (to the south) and from Moneyrow Green (to the east).

Whilst the principle was supported there were a number of physical constraints and issues which would make the request challenging to deliver. For example:

- Limited land available to build a new footway
- Drainage ditches in close proximity to the road which may require 'filling in' to enable the path to be built
- Potential routes were secluded and currently unlit which may create safety and personal security issues
- Urbanisation of a rural area

In summary, he welcomed the petition from Jane Brocklebank and, subject to support from Council, would be very happy for officers to develop potential schemes for discussion with the Lead Petitioner; Members and Bray Parish Council.

James Blunden, a 14- year old pupil at the school, spoke on behalf of the Lead Petitioner. He stated that he spoke also as a member of the Holyport village community. Like many others, his family had been hugely excited by the new free school and he felt incredibly privileged to attend it. There was probably no safe route from the village to the school. Each morning he had to fight the rush hour traffic on a dangerous bend on the Ascot Road before crossing the road on a three-way junction on a very busy route, and the same on the return route. It was dangerous for pupils, staff and their families. He had been shocked by the figures published by the government in relation to road safety outside schools, which included between 2006-2011 that there were over half a million collisions within 500 metres of a school and 1000 child casualties a month. He wondered how many could be avoided. In addition there were just under 2000 cyclist accidents outside schools including six deaths. Road casualties and deaths had been steadily declining despite the increase in traffic on roads. This told him that the work of councils to make roads safer was working. He thanked the council for the reduced speed limit on the Ascot Road and work elsewhere to make roads safer in the borough. He questioned whether the Ascot Road crossing on a dangerous bend was fit for purpose when a school was close by? Was the B3024 fit for purpose when there was no safe walking route? At the moment the school provided buses but these were not free to all and in any case many wanted to walk or cycle. A safe route would also allow access beyond the school campus for local residents. The number of signatories showed the wider community wanted this. It was a complex issue but there were options on both the Ascot Road and the B3024. Mr Blunden referred to a letter received the day before from a local resident supporting the petition.

Councillor Coppinger stated that he and his fellow Ward Councillors were immensely proud to have the school in their ward. He was particularly interested as Vice Chair of Holyport Primary school. The issue was far wider than just access to the school; boarders were totally isolated at weekends. He asked officers to come back with a plan as soon as possible. Councillor Burbage highlighted that the Parish Council was in favour of the proposal. Councillor Walters stated the issue was worth looking at again.

Councillor Rayner explained that he had been approached about the issue by residents when he first became Lead Member for Highways and Transport in May 2015 and he had suggested a full council debate. There were many problems outside many borough schools and he had therefore requested a report be brought to Cabinet in May 2016 to address these issues. Councillor Rayner proposed the following motion:

- i) The council notes the petition, and recognises the need to create and maintain safe routes to school
- ii) The council notes that £80,000 of highways developer contribution funding awaits a suitable scheme
- iii) The council recommends that a report be brought to Cabinet in Spring 2016 with potential options to utilise the funding and address the issues raised by the petition, including a full consultation process

Councillor Werner commented that a safer route was vital. Many schools in the borough had traffic problems, for example he was trying to get a scheme in Oaken Grove outside Furze Platt Infant and Junior Schools. He proposed a amendment to

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the motion to include the words 'and outside other schools' in the third recommendation. Councillor Beer second the proposed amendment.

Councillor Rayner explained that the council was already working with the two Furze Platt schools following a petition and consultation. The borough had 57 schools, each was unique therefore separate papers to Cabinet would be required. He therefore did not accept Councillor Werner's proposed amendment.

Councillor Dudley explained that the funding for the scheme (£83,000) was sitting in Holyport college's bank account from the Department for Education. As part of the original planning application and legal agreement the funding was to be applied to a mutually agreeable scheme for footpaths and highways.

Councillor E. Wilson commented that solutions needed to be found sooner rather than later as these schools were growing larger. The school in his ward also had traffic problems. If the school had funding and officers had ideas, they needed to get together and take action. He agreed with Councillor Werner that other schools had issues; once Holyport college was sorted, others should be looked at.

Councillor Burbage asked Councillor Werner if he would withdraw his amendment given the petition for debate specifically related to Holyport college. He endorsed the remarks about safer routes for other locations but the response needed to be specific. Councillor Werner agreed to withdraw the amendment given the funding was already available for a specific scheme at Holyport College, however he therefore questioned why the petition was required. Councillor Dudley explained that although the funding was available, the council was responsible for highways and therefore had to come up with an appropriate scheme.

Councillor Wilson, as Lead Member for Planning and the former Chairman of the Maidenhead Development Control Panel that agreed to the Holyport college application, highlighted that the funding formed part of the developer obligations and options should therefore should be investigated.

Councillor Bicknell stated that there were 64 schools in the borough and the council wanted every child to be able to get to school safely. One size did not fit all however as there were different problems at each. There was not enough funding to fix all problems therefore they needed to be prioritised.

Councillor Rayner explained the outline programme, subject to council approval:

- |                                  |                                   |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Design options / feasibility:  | January / February 2016           |
| • Consultation:                  | March / April 2016                |
| • Cabinet Report:                | May 2016                          |
| • Detailed design / procurement: | June to July 2016                 |
| • Construction:                  | Completion by end of October 2016 |

It was proposed by Councillor Rayner, seconded by Councillor Coppinger and:

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That:**

- i) The council notes the petition, and recognises the need to create and maintain safe routes to school**

**ii) The council notes that £80,000 of highways developer contribution funding awaits a suitable scheme**

**iii) The council recommends that a report be brought to Cabinet in Spring 2016 with potential options to utilise the funding and address the issues raised by the petition, including a full consultation process**

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

c) Rachel Cook asked the following question of Councillor Mrs Bateson:

As the council strives to be open and transparent then please explain why I have not been provided with the data (apart from resident's names and addresses of course) from the latest RBWM survey which, over the summer, asked residents to nominate local green spaces for protection in the Borough Plan? I have already requested this in my voluntary capacity as a member of the working group on the Maidenhead and Cox Green local plan and so far I have been unable to obtain this data. I think it is important that we have this evidence to demonstrate what residents consider are important local green spaces.

Councillor Mrs Bateson responded that earlier in the year the Borough Council had run an online survey to obtain residents' views on certain policy questions. This was to feed into the preparation of the new Borough Local Plan and the results from each question were only analysed at the point they were required for policy formulation.

One question asked residents if they wished to nominate any areas for Local Green Space designation. The results of that question had now been collated:

In summary, 263 suggestions were made with the most popular being:

- Poundfield: 88 nominations
- Ray Mill Road East / Deerswood Meadow: 55 nominations
- Braywick Park: 11 nominations.
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No other piece of land received more than 8 nominations with many only being mentioned once.

The Borough Council would consider whether the areas nominated passed the legal tests for designation and also whether any designations were planned in emerging neighbourhood plans. If the Borough Council nominated any areas as Local Green Space then this would be done through the Borough Local Plan

Ms Cook, by way of a supplementary question, asked what was the procedure residents would have to follow to nominate Deerswood as a Local Green space?

Councillor Mrs Bateson responded that this nomination had already been done in the summer. A motion later would deal with open space; the intention was to update the audit last undertaken in 2008.

d) Rachel Cook asked the following question of Councillor D. Wilson:

*Paragraph 73* of the NPPF states that open space makes an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities. *Paragraph 74*. Of the NPPF states that existing open space should not be built on unless an assessment has been

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undertaken which clearly shows the open space, to be surplus to requirements. Therefore can you publically provide the assessment (as required by the National Planning Policy Framework, section 74) that clearly shows why this council considers the public open space at Ray Mill Road East (Deerswood Meadow) surplus to requirements, allowing it to be sold off?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that proposals for Ray Mill Road East would be the subject of a planning application in mid to late 2016 which would be submitted by the council's development partner, yet to be procured. The application would need to make the case for development, including demonstrating that NPPF was complied with. Within the application proposal it would detail the second part of the question as to whether it complied with the NPPF 73 and 74.

Ms Cook, by way of a supplementary question, stated that council figures identified a deficit of open space of 62 hectares, compared to Windsor with 20 and Cookham with 7. Maidenhead had three times less open space available to the public than Windsor. The Conservative manifesto stated that the council would maintain and improve parks and open spaces – why was the council letting down the people of Maidenhead?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that the council was not letting down the people of Maidenhead. A motion later in the meeting would deal with the subject of open space provision. On the 20 October 2015 the council had received its objectively assessed need figure for housing which equated to 712 dwellings per annum for the Plan period. The council would need to look at all scenarios for Borough Local Plan submission.

e) Craig McDermott asked the following question of Councillor D. Wilson:

Your ward at Riverside has been recognised as having a deficit of public open space both within the council's 2008 open space audit and the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2013 - 2030) and so how can you justify losing more of it, which will happen, if the council sells off the public open space at Ray Mill Road East?

Natalie Hill asked the following question of Councillor Dudley:

Your ward at Riverside has been recognised as having a deficit of public open space both within the council's 2008 open space audit and the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2013-2030) and so how can you justify losing more of it, which will happen, if the council sells the public open space at Ray Mill Road East?

Jan Stannard asked the following question of Councillor Dudley:

The latest council studies show that your ward has a deficit of open space, so I would like to ask what you think about the fact that building on this open space would make this deficit worse?

Kate Jesseman asked the following question of Councillor D. Wilson:

My question is simple when will Maidenhead Council stop the destruction of our heritage of enjoying small pieces of open wildlife space such as Deerswood Meadow, in the name of housing and development?

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On behalf of himself and Councillor Dudley, Councillor D. Wilson responded that

Councillor D. Wilson responded that to meet the Borough's assessed future housing growth requirements of providing 712 new homes per annum (between 2013-2030) the Council had examined the potential of accommodating new homes on a number of sites including the council owned land at Ray Mill Road East.

The completed feasibility work reported to Cabinet had identified options for the development of the site. Following positive feedback received from residents at a public consultation event held on 16 December 2014 on the preferred option, Cabinet on 26 March 2015 approved the proposal to market the western part of the site (measuring 1.52 hectares) as a potential residential development opportunity for 64 homes and retain the remaining land (measuring 0.94 hectares) to the east as green open space.

The preferred mixed tenure / housing type scheme comprises 64 residential units made up of 4 one bed apartments, 12 two bed apartments, 22 three bed houses and 26 four bed houses. Out of the overall 64 units, 32 units (50%) would be developed for private sale, 12 units (20%) would be shared ownership homes and the remaining 20 units (30%) would be purchased (off plan) by the Council to add into its PRS property portfolio with the aim of offering these properties at market rent to key workers such as teachers.

In line with the executive approvals, the site would be offered to the market on a conditional basis to secure a suitable development partner who would bring forward and manage the delivery of the above scheme. To comply with Policy R1 of the Borough Local Plan which recognised the importance of this designated "Urban Open Space" for recreation the retained open area (0.94 hectares) would be professionally landscaped and visually enhanced to provide an accessible high quality green public open space.

In response to a comment from Councillor Werner that the question had not been answered, Councillor Wilson stated that the council had a huge demand for increased housing throughout the Royal Borough. The figure of 712 dwellings per annum had been announced publically. As an administration the council wanted to protect the Green Belt and therefore had to look at previously developed sites.

Jan Stannard, by way of a supplementary question asked Councillors to see if any other brownfield sites could be looked at because the Deerswood site was a public open space.

Councillor D. Wilson responded that because of the expected housing demand and Green Belt and floodplain constraints the council was limited as to where it could provide additional housing. The council was looking at increased town centre capacity and other sites around the borough. The land to the east of Ray Mill Road East was in the flood zone and would remain as a green open space.

Ms Jesseman, by way of a supplementary question asked when the council would stop destroying heritage and resident's enjoyment of small pieces of open space in the name of housing development.

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Councillor D. Wilson responded that all aspects would be taken into account when a planning application was submitted. All residents could respond to the consultation.

f) Christine Gill asked the following question of Councillor D. Wilson and Councillor Dudley:

Has the proposed development land at Ray Mill Road East been promised or offered to any building company either verbally or in writing?

Councillor Dudley responded that he could confirm that the Council had not entered into dialogue or contract either verbally or in writing with any potential purchasers or parties for the proposed sale of land at Ray Mill Road East.

In line with Cabinet approval received on 26 March 2015, part of the site (measuring 1.52 hectares) would be offered to the unrestricted open market on a conditional basis to secure a suitable development partner who would bring forward and manage the delivery of a mix of 64 homes for outright private sale, affordable shared ownership and private rental and affordable rental. The latter would be purchased by the Council to provide homes at market rent for key workers such as teachers, a manifesto commitment. The remaining 0.94 hectares of the site would be retained by the Council, professionally landscaped and visually enhanced to provide an important functional green recreational and natural habitat for the benefit of Maidenhead Riverside.

Marketing of the site on a conditional basis by informal tender would commence in early 2016. Expressions of interest for the site from potential purchasers / developers would be invited by a specific closing date. Due diligence would follow. All bids received by the closing date would be assessed against selection criteria to ensure regeneration aims were being met. The outcome of the tender process and recommendations would be reported to Cabinet in due course. Approval would be sought from Cabinet to appoint the preferred bidder / development partner for the delivery of this residential scheme, which related to 55/60% of the site other than the flood plain area.

Ms Gill, by way of a supplementary question asked the Councillor could confirm that no particular bidder or developer had been spoken to or offered the site?

Councillor Dudley responded that there had been no prior contracting of any type.

g) Tony Gale of asked the following question of Councillor D. Wilson:

Can the Council confirm that no final decision will be made about any plans for the publicly owned open space off Ray Mill Road East until all environmental and public access issues have been fully addressed and made publicly available ?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that all technical and environmental assessments required would be undertaken and any issues identified (including public access issues) would be addressed prior to marketing and reported to the council's Regeneration Sub Committee.

As recommended at the Cabinet Meeting on 26 March 2015, Cabinet would receive a further report following marketing of the site to request approval to appoint a preferred development partner for the delivery of the preferred scheme.



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Proposals for Ray Mill Road East would be the subject of a planning application in mid to late 2016 by the council's development partner, yet to be procured. This application would be carefully and objectively considered, and all environmental and public access issues would be taken into account.

Mr Gale, by way of a supplementary question quoted Councillor Wilson as reported in the Maidenhead Advertiser earlier in the year as saying 'with the introduction of Crossrail we can expect it will make sense for people to move to the town as it would make sense for commuters'. Would the Councillor agree that this rather implied the houses were predicated for people moving to the town rather than people already in the town?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that the town was in a unique position that should be embraced. Crossrail would bring lots of investment. Some grade A office accommodation in the town had already been taken up by companies wanting to move out of London as Maidenhead was seen as a good strategic hub for the Thames Valley. It was therefore not unreasonable to build houses to meet demand. The number of primary school children was set to increase therefore there was a need to build school to meet the needs of the next generation.

h) Jan Stannard asked the following question of Councillor D Wilson:

Why did the housing site assessment in the consultation to the Local Borough Plan state that there were "no known conservation issues relating to the public open space at Ray Mill Road East" when it is common knowledge (over the last 20 years at least) that there is an unusually high population of toads here and the common toad has been listed as a Biodiversity Action Plan priority species deserving consideration and protection from adverse development?

Natalie Hill asked the following question of Councillor Dudley:

Why was the land at Ray Mill Road East considered to have "no known conservation issues" when the toad patrol has been there for about 20 years and there are toad warning road signs?

On behalf of himself and Councillor Dudley, Councillor D. Wilson responded that the site assessment that was undertaken to support the January 2014 Preferred Options document did not identify any nature conservation issues on the site itself, although the council was aware that toads inhabited the general vicinity. Consultants would deal with the ecology issues as part of the Borough Local Plan

Ms Stannard, by way of a supplementary question, stated that there were at one time over 7000 toads; as the land was encroached upon this had reduced to 1500. The development as suggested would decimate the priority species. The manifesto stated the council would protect open spaces – was the council listening?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that a motion later in the meeting would deal with an open space audit, which was last undertaken in 2008. All areas of the borough would be looked at in the Borough Local Plan.

Councillor Bhatti arrived at 7.45pm.

## 7. PETITION FOR DEBATE

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An e-petition containing 1392 signatories was submitted to the Council on 8 October 2015. In accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution, it was requested by the lead petitioner that the petition be reported to, and debated at, a full Council meeting. The petition read as follows:

*'We the undersigned petition The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to retain all the land at Ray Mill Road East, Maidenhead, currently designated as public open space, under council ownership and ensure that the majority of the land remains so designated and incorporates nature as an integral feature for the benefit of future generations'*

The petition was introduced by Mark Shephard, Development & Property Manager. He explained that the 6 acre site (former playing fields to St Luke's School) was acquired from Berkshire County Council in February 1997 for future residential development.

The majority of the site was bounded by residential property. The site could be accessed via an open pedestrian pathway leading from Blackamoor Lane. It could also be accessed to the side of the council owned Mill House Family Centre on Ray Mill Road East (RMRE). The site was split west to east with two different zones of flood risk. The western part of the site was the lower Flood Risk Zone 2 (3.7 acres) while the eastern part of the site was the higher Flood Risk Zone 3 (2.3 acres).

Options for the future use of the site were considered at Cabinet in October 2013. Options included the provision of adult social care, a new school and residential development. Residential development was the preferred option. Cabinet updates were provided in February 2014 and July 2014. Commercial property consultants, GVA, were appointed to undertake an initial feasibility assessment of the site. The feasibility study confirmed the suitability of the site for residential development. The report discussed delivery options available to the Council including self development or a direct land sale of the site (subject to Council conditions as to the form of development). The indicative scheme layout from the feasibility study included 64 dwellings comprising 26 four bed houses, 22 three bed houses, 12 two bed flats and 4 one bed flats. It is proposed that approximately 50% of the site (32 units) would be developed for private sale housing, 20% as shared ownership (12 units) and 30% retained by the Council as private rented units (20 units).

In March 2015 Cabinet recommended a Development Manager be appointed to market the lower flood risk site and identify a suitable development partner to the Council. The remaining 2.3 acres of the site (contained in the higher risk flood zone 3) would be professionally landscaped to provide high quality public open space. A development partner was expected to be confirmed in the first quarter of 2016. The site would be subject to a full planning application.

Jan Stannard spoke on behalf of the Lead Petitioner. She stated that the land at RMRE should be taken out of the Borough Local Plan for two reasons. Firstly, the land was to be sold off as surplus yet Maidenhead had a big deficit and did not meet Section 74 requirements. Secondly, the document stated that there were no known conservation issues, but there was a toad colony of regional importance. Professional landscaping would decimate the colony. Misleading statements meant the consultation had been undemocratic. The council had a manifesto pledge to maintain and improve open spaces; residents expected it to act with integrity and honour. Residents were

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asking the council to remove Deerswood in totality from the plan and designate it a local green space.

Councillor Jones and McWilliams arrived at 7.55pm.

Members viewed a short video in relation to the petition.

Councillor Smith commented that in the two years since the plan was put into place he as a Ward Councillor had not heard from petitioners. He had received one call from a resident who objected to the development on the grounds of overdevelopment and building on the flood plain. The absence of comment did not surprise him because the open space policy showed that the large majority of residents were happy with the provision of open space as it existed. He highlighted that he used Town Moor and North Town Moor both of which were decent sized pieces of open space. The 2008 review, pre-Crossrail and crystallisation of regeneration plans generally agreed that demand for new private and social housing exceeded supply. RBWM policy was brownfield first, but if it did not give serious consideration to developing all land, it would lose planning appeals and therefore lose control.

If we build up or out, the ratio of people to open space would shrink. The open space policy needed to be coherent with emerging Local Plan and with rising housing pressure. The policy needed an injection of imagination as it was about quality as well as quantity. If ratio fell below an unacceptable level then it would need to be addressed.

Notwithstanding the desirability of reviewing the Open Space Policy, standing policy guidance was clear that 'existing open space should not be built on unless clearly shown to be surplus to requirements'.

Councillor Dudley commented that the site was adjacent to Boulters Meadow. He had attended a number of meetings with local residents over the last few months; their concerns had been in relation to bulk and scale. The council was going through a procurement route so it retained a degree of control about the bulk and height of the design on the site. As elected politicians, councillors had to make difficult decisions. He was a great lover of the natural habitat and 83% of the land in the borough was Green Belt, but there was also a great number of people who wanted to live in the area. Younger people wanted the opportunity to buy their own home. The council had a responsibility to balance the interests of the natural environment with the ability to get people on the housing ladder. Therefore the council was looking to bring forward proposals for a mixed supply of housing on the site.

Councillor Ms Stretton, spoke as Principal Member with responsibility for public open spaces. She was aware of the toads as she knew a resident who lived in a property backing onto the site. It would give her great pleasure to give unequivocal support to the petition however life was not so simple. The council was continually required to balance the needs of different groups. The petition described the site as being designated as a public open space. This was not the case. The site had been described in 2003 as an important urban open space. There were 200 hectares of designated open space and parks in the borough and the council had a good track record of managing these areas. She was currently on working on two areas in Eton Wick and Shurlock Row to bring them into public access. A motion later in the meeting would clarify the overall picture and reassess the site in question. The national housing shortage meant the council was required by the government to provide

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minimum housing levels despite constraints. Every potential piece of land needed to be assessed on its own merits. She assured residents that the information presented at the meeting would be taken into account in the Borough Local Plan and any planning application for the site.

Councillor Ms Stretton proposed the following motion:

- i) The Council notes the petition and acknowledges the concerns raised
- ii) The Council notes the extant Royal Borough Cabinet decision from 26 March 2015 to develop part of the land
- iii) The Council notes the opportunity for representations to be made to any subsequent planning application
- iv) The Council notes the motion relating to Public Open Space on tonight's agenda

Councillor D. Wilson stated that the administration wanted to protect the Green Belt. The piece of land in question was purchased by the council in 1997 for future residential development. The site had constraints. He fully supported the motion by Councillor Stretton.

Councillor Werner stated that he was disappointed with the motion and would not be able to support it. There was a need for housing to give people the opportunity to get on the housing ladder but he could not see how this would happen with the housing as proposed. The affordable housing split was 80%/20% but he did not know of any teachers that could afford 80%. Unless controls and covenants were put on the properties would be bought as buy to lets. Other similar sites such as Braywick Park were being divided up by competing interests. The golf club was also being put up for sale. There was a deficit of public open space in the area. The toad colony could be of regional importance and needed to be researched before any decision to sell the land for development. He suggested that at least the decision should be deferred until a proper open space audit was undertaken.

Councillor Brimacombe commented that the public speaker had said the toad population would be decimated by landscaping. It would be important to register the needs and be sympathetic to biodiversity.

Councillor Dudley commented that the council had levers to positively affect the distribution of housing stock in the borough. Twelve of the units would be shared ownership, a successful national scheme. The council was also able to offer Two5Nine properties for private rent. The council was also looking to develop another scheme of direct discounted affordable rental properties.

Councillor Ms Stretton commented that no developer would buy until planning permission was in place therefore the land would not be sold until that happened, which would require ecology surveys.

Councillor Burbage highlighted that no member of the opposition commented on the proposals when they went through Cabinet in March 2015. The pressure to provide housing was putting incredible pressure on land in the south east. The Green Belt protected the borough to some extent but sites such as RMRE were rare.

Councillor Beer commented that before he was a councillor 20 years ago, the council had been a housing association. The stock was then sold off to the tune of £6m which

funded council projects including the borough share of TVAC. The council had lost sight of the fact that it was a housing association responsible for funding housing for people. Large houses in particular in the western end of the borough were totally out of the reach of ordinary people. Even shared ownership was a bridge too far. There was a need to focus on rentals. He appreciated the 712 figure but asked where they would go? The Davies Commission had highlighted that few local authorities had addressed housing need of 70,000 extra houses for Heathrow expansion. This would spill into neighbouring boroughs in the countryside. The council should not be releasing areas of green field or green space because when more people were living in the area more open space would be required. Crossrail would bring people into work in Maidenhead, but not necessarily to live there.

Councillor Werner commented that in March 2015 he did not know much about the site in question, thanks to the campaign he now understood the implications.

It was proposed by Councillor Stretton, seconded by Councillor D. Wilson and:

**RESOLVED: That:**

- i) The Council notes the petition and acknowledges the concerns raised**
- ii) The Council notes the extant Royal Borough Cabinet decision from 26 March 2015 to develop part of the land**
- iii) The Council notes the opportunity for representations to be made to any subsequent planning application**
- iv) The Council notes the motion relating to Public Open Space on tonight's agenda**

**45 Councillors voted in favour of the motion – Councillors Michael Airey, Natasha Airey, Malcolm Alexander, Christine Bateson, George Bathurst, Hashim Bhatti, Phillip Bicknell, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, David Burbage, Stuart Carroll, Gerald Clark, John Collins, David Coppinger, Simon Dudley, Marius Gilmore, Jesse Grey, Geoffrey Hill, David Hilton, Maureen Hunt, Mohammed Ilyas, Richard Kellaway, John Lenton, Sayonara Luxton, Ross McWilliams, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Nicola Pryer, Eileen Quick, Jack Rankin, Colin Rayner, Samantha Rayner, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Hari Sharma, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John Story, Claire Stretton, Lisa Targowska, Leo Walters, Derek Wilson, Ed Wilson and Lynda Yong.**

**Three councillor voted against the motion – Councillors Beer, Mrs Jones and Werner.**

**8. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

a) Andrew Hill asked the following question of Councillor Burbage:

Does the Council believe in the principle that as wide a range of people as possible are able to participate as School Governors - and if so what steps are taken to achieve this?

Councillor Burbage responded that the council believed that school governors should be drawn from all communities across the Borough so that a rich variety of views were considered to further improve the quality of education in schools. The council encouraged local people to register their expressions of interest via the RBWM

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website which also listed current vacancies and our team would work with governing bodies to make appropriate appointments. The Governor Services team works closely with the One Borough volunteer group to raise awareness and provides extensive training support for all governors throughout their tenure so that no experience was needed to get started.

Mr Hill, by way of a supplementary question, referred to the Peter Clark report that recommended the presumption that an individual should be a governor at a maximum of two schools at any one time. All Academies and Multi Academy Trusts were responsible for reviewing and taking appropriate steps to ensure a wide range of people could hold positions.

Councillor Burbage responded that he was not familiar with the detail but he was confident that the decisions taken on local authority representative appointments were taken very seriously. Mr Hill's comments would be taken on board in relation to future appointments. He highlighted that it was not always the council making the decision, many were appointed by the school.

The Mayor commented that Governor Services worked with schools to ensure they have the best quality governors. If Mr Hill wished for further information he should put it in writing.

b) Andrew Hill asked the following question of Councillor Burbage:

What does the Council's company called "Two5Nine" Ltd do?

Councillor Burbage responded that Two-5-Nine had been set up to generate income from non core activities to support the Council's low tax manifesto commitments and financial position.

Currently the two main activities that had been transacted through Two-5-Nine had been:

- a series of social care training courses held in partnership with Buckinghamshire New University held in a property owned by the council in Ray Mill Road East;
- the letting of 8 private rented sector flats in York Road Maidenhead (the council does not have the power to directly offer the sort of short term lets that are used in the private rented sector)

Mr Hill, by way of a supplementary question, commented that looking at the borough website he would not know that was what the company did. He commented that Councillor Burbage's declaration in relation to Two5Nine differed from that by Councillors Dudley and Bicknell.

Councillor Burbage responded that he would ensure that the correct declarations were added to the website. If the website was not clear in explaining the role of Two5Nine he would ask officers to add more detail.

### 9. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor submitted in writing details of engagements that she and the Deputy Mayor had undertaken since the last meeting, which were noted by the Council. The Mayor

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commented that a large number of events had been attended over the last ten weeks. Christmas would also be a busy time.

The Mayor placed on record her thanks to Christabel Shawcross who was attending her last meeting as Strategic Director for Adults, Culture and Health. Christabel had also been Deputy Managing Director and Interim Managing Director for a period of time. The Mayor wished her all the best for the future.

### 10. PETITIONS

No petitions were presented

### 11. APPROVAL OF AN AMENDED PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2015/16

Members considered an amended Pay Policy Statement. Councillor Burbage explained the updated policy included information including the ratio of highest paid employee to lowest and pay settlements.

Councillor Beer made the following comments:

- Paragraph 2.1 – he believed the job title should read ‘Strategic Director of *Adult Services*, Culture and Health.’
- Paragraph 2.4c – he asked if this referred to just 2.4 or also 2.2 and 2.3.
- Paragraph 3.12 – he asked why other routes than Great Western were not included, such as First Buses

Councillor Burbage commented that the references to Chief Officer titles were due to change in January 2016 anyway. The section on benefits was a statement of fact rather than a wish list. He did not have the answer to the question in relation to paragraph 2.1. He proposed a delegation to himself in consultation with Councillor Beer to amend the policy before being published on the council website in ten working days.

It was proposed by Councillor Burbage, seconded by Councillor Bicknell, and:

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council delegate authority to the Leader of the Council in conjunction with the Interim Opposition Leader to approve the amended 2015/16 Pay Policy Statement and as required by the Localism Act 2011, publish it on its website within 10 working days of this approval.**

### 12. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME - FULL REVIEW AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Members considered recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) following a full review of the Members' Allowance scheme. Councillor Burbage explained that the IRP had been advised by an expert. He thanked the Members of the IRP for their many hours of work and comprehensive report. Councillor Burbage highlighted the Public Service Discount which demonstrated that whatever level or remuneration Councillors received, 49% of their time was given voluntarily. He paid tribute to all Members for the work they undertook on behalf of residents and visitors to the borough. Without their dedication the borough would not be in such a good state. He highlighted that RBWM's basic allowance was relatively low and the IRP had proposed a marginal upward increase. He proposed three amendments to the IRP's recommendations:

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- 1) Principal Members to be remunerated at the same level as Lead Members i.e. the SRA will be £11,880 not £9,504.
- 2) The Chair of the Pension Fund Panel to be remunerated at the same level as the Audit Panel i.e. £4,752.
- 3) Members attending Licensing sub-committees to be remunerated as per the Appeals Panel (£30 to 3 hours, £60 for over 3 hours).

It was noted this would require the following amendment to recommendation c):

An additional £26,000 to be added to the Members' Allowance budget for 2015/2016, increasing to £87,000 for all subsequent years, to fund the changes in the scheme.

Councillor Burbage commented that in expanding the Cabinet by four Members, equal in responsibility and remit, it would be rather undermined if the allowances paid to the Principal Members were to be any different to the Lead Members. It would not be fair to create an arbitrary difference because the law restricted a Cabinet to ten voting Members in Cabinet meetings. It was also considered that there was a large and meaningful financial responsibility on the Pension Fund Panel and by extension on the Chairman. With a fund in the low billions, decisions at the Panel could affect funds in the millions and consequently the council tax payer. In relation to Licensing Panel Sub Committees, meetings did take place and often took a long time out of a councillor's day. He therefore did not see the difference between this and the Appeals Panel and therefore proposed the remuneration be the same.

Councillor Mrs Jones stated that she understood that the IRP had identified the basic allowance was lower than other councils and she was aware that councillors put in a lot of time and effort however she was very concerned with the proliferation of extra Special responsibility Allowances (SRAs) which did not reflect the savings culture of the borough. She would not be able to support a motion that awarded councillors themselves extra money.

Councillor Beer supported the fine tuning, particularly in relation to the Licensing Panel Sub Committee. However, the Opposition were of the view that the role of Principal Member should not exist. The law stated a Cabinet was restricted to ten Members and this should not be circumvented in any way. He had heard comments that the Opposition did not do its duty or attend certain meetings. However the administration held 72% of the remunerated posts. Only one of the three Opposition Members received an SRA. He would be voting against the proposals.

Councillor Brimacombe highlighted that if a councillor held more than one post attracting an SRA, they only received one of them. Many councillors had wider responsibilities for example Parish Councillor or school governor. In a similar way to a council tax reduction, those wishing not to receive the extra allowance could choose not to do so. Councillor Dudley commented that he was completely supportive of hard working councillors receiving a level of allowance reflective of their contribution. The Mayor commented that it was important to have a realistic level of allowance to attract people from across the spectrum of salaries including the young and those who worked.



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Councillor Werner commented that when he was first elected at age 25 the allowance was practically nothing; he had stood for election because he wanted to serve the community. It was a disgrace that the allowance had increased since then. He would continue as in the past to give his allowance to worthwhile charities.

Councillor Mrs Airey commented that she supported the increase in the basic allowance. The average age of a councillor was 66 and there were few females. The allowance was not high compared to part time work. Councillor Kellaway highlighted it was important the public was aware the allowance was subject to National Insurance and income tax. Councillor Bicknell suggested Councillor Werner should declare to Democratic Services to which charities he donated his allowance. Councillor Werner responded that he gave donations to charity in an anonymous capacity. Councillor Smith highlighted that most councillors had partners and they were affected when councillors were not at home.

Councillor Burbage highlighted that paragraph 19 of the IRP report stated that the total paid out in SRAs was not excessive in the comparative context. A number of Members held more than one SRA role but only claimed one SRA payment. In relation to savings, the borough got great value from the administration and had managed to cut council tax six years in a row.

It was proposed by Councillor Burbage, seconded by Councillor Collins, and:

### **RESOLVED: That:**

- a) **Council agree proposals by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IPR) as detailed in Appendix A subject to three amendments to recommendations 6, 17 and 18 as below:**
  - 1) **Principal Members to be remunerated at the same level as Lead Members i.e. the SRA will be £11,880 not £9,504.**
  - 2) **The Chair of the Pension Fund Panel to be remunerated at the same level as the Audit Panel i.e. £4,752.**
  - 3) **Members attending Licensing sub-committees to be remunerated as per the Appeals Panel (£30 to 3 hours, £60 for over 3 hours).**
- b) **The Head of Governance, Policy and Performance amend the Members' Allowances Scheme in the Constitution accordingly.**
- c) **An additional £26,000 to be added to the Members' Allowance budget for 2015/2016, increasing to £87,000 for all subsequent years, to fund the changes in the scheme.**
- d) **An additional £375 to be added to the Civic Allowances budget for 2015/16, increasing to £900 for all subsequent years, to fund the changes to the scheme.**

**44 Councillors voted in favour of the motion – Councillors Michael Airey, Natasha Airey, Malcolm Alexander, Christine Bateson, George Bathurst, Hashim Bhatti, Phillip Bicknell, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, David Burbage, Stuart Carroll, Gerald Clark, John Collins, David Coppinger, Simon Dudley, Marius Gilmore, Jesse Grey, Geoffrey Hill,**

**David Hilton, Maureen Hunt, Mohammed Ilyas, Richard Kellaway, John Lenton, Sayonara Luxton, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Nicola Pryer, Eileen Quick, Jack Rankin, Colin Rayner, Samantha Rayner, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Hari Sharma, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John Story, Claire Stretton, Lisa Targowska, Leo Walters, Derek Wilson, Ed Wilson and Lynda Yong.**

**Three councillors voted against the motion – Councillors Beer, Mrs Jones and Werner.**

**Councillor McWilliams was absent from the room during the voting on the item.**

Councillor Walters left the meeting at 9.08pm.

13. STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Members considered a revised Licensing Policy statement. Councillor D. Wilson explained that the Licensing Act required every council to publish a statement. The borough's current policy lasted until 5 January 2016. The process to update the policy was undertaken by the licensing Panel, which started discussions in July 2014. The process involved a statutory consultation period and the council took on board the views of interested parties including Members and Thames Valley police as well as seeking legal advice. Various re-drafts of the policy were discussed at Panel meetings from July 2014 onwards until November 2015 when the Panel endorsed the version before Council.

Members noted there were two main changes to the current policy:

- The introduction of a 'Framework Hours Policy'. During the consultation process Members of the council and Thames Valley Police had expressed their concerns about the effects of late night opening hours on residents and on crime and disorder in the area, particularly in Windsor town centre. As a result the policy had a more strategic approach to licensing hours and included a schedule of the expected opening and closing hours for different types of licensed premises. The hours were not set in stone and if an applicant wished to depart from them, the reasons for this could be considered by a Licensing Panel Sub committee.
- Specific reference to the issue of child sexual exploitation and what the council expected of licence holders in reference to safeguarding.

Councillor Mrs Airey endorsed the proposals. It was important that child sexual exploitation was addressed in the area of licensing and it was clear it was not just a Children's Services issue.

Councillor Beer highlighted a typographical error on page 111 which should read 'rationale' rather than 'rational'.

Councillor E. Wilson commented that the framework hours gave a clear indication to the night time economy in Windsor. He welcomed the clarity.

It was proposed by Councillor D. Wilson, seconded by Councillor Alexander, and:

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council adopt the attached Licensing Policy Statement for a 5 year period beginning on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2016, subject to the amendment of the third paragraph on page 111 to read 'rationale'.**

14. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES - GAMBLING ACT 2005

Members considered a revised Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles. Councillor D. Wilson explained that the Gambling act required every council to have in place a statement, which must refer to the following objectives:

- To prevent gambling from being a source of crime and disorder
- To ensure that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- To protect children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

The council's current statement had been in effect since 2013 and lasted until the end of December 2015. Gambling was a relatively low level activity in the borough. There were 22 bookmakers, two racetracks and one adult entertainment centre. There had been no problems associated with any of the premises over the past three years and no complaints about licensable activities at these premises.

Members noted that the process for updating the statement lay with the Licensing Panel. At the July 2015 Panel the draft statement was approved based on the existing statement with no significant changes. No relevant responses were received during the consultation period and therefore at the October 2015 meeting the Panel approved the version for full Council consideration.

Councillor Werner stated that he supported the proposals. He commented that gambling was not a low level activity at Ascot twice a year. He was surprised that there had been no complaints. Councillor Hilton commented that although there was some over-indulgence by racegoers there were no incidents relating to gambling itself. Councillor Bicknell commented that Windsor Racecourse was a very well-run operation and he was pleased to see it continue.

It was proposed by Councillor D. Wilson, seconded by Councillor Alexander, and:

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council adopt the attached Gambling Act 2005 "Statement of Principles" for a 3 year period beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016.**

15. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Members considered a number of amendments to the constitution. Councillor Burbage explained that the report proposed a number of amendments as set out in the report.

Councillor Beer highlighted that the reference to Part 2B A3 on page 149 should actually refer to Part 4A. In relation to the Crime and Disorder Panel he commented that in the past DALC had been represented. He suggested that wording be added to page 150 to state that parish representatives would be expected to liaise with relevant parishes on a regular basis. Councillor Hilton, as Chairman of the Panel stated that of particular interest to him was the essential clarification and formalisation of the process for the co-option of Parish Councillors to the Panel. This was a dynamic Council with, in this changing world, the ambition to create the most effective

organisation and processes possible to best manage the operation and deliver quality services to residents. All this led to change such as the formation of a Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee and the Area and Joint Development Control Panels which rightly were presented to council for consideration and approval. There were very many more trivial changes that the council would not challenge and did not merit referral to full Council. The proposal to delegate authority to the Constitution Sub Committee to make such minor changes was both logical and sensible. Of importance to all was the safeguard that this delegation did not include powers expressly reserved for full Council or Cabinet in the Constitution or in law. He urged Members to support the motion.

Councillor Werner asked why the parish representatives on the Crime and Disorder Panel were not allowed to vote. Councillor Hilton commented that this was historical and that he allowed parish representatives to speak and ask questions at the meeting. Borough councillors were elected and this gave them a different position. There had been no, or at most very few, actual votes in the time he had been Chairman. He did not believe that this diminished the role of the parish representatives.

It was proposed by Councillor Burbage, seconded by Councillor Hilton, and:

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council**

- i. **Approves the amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix 1, subject to:**
  - **The reference to Part 2B on page 149 of the report be amended to Part 4A.**
  - **Additional wording to page 150 of the report to read ‘The parish representatives be expected to liaise with relevant parishes on a regular basis.’**
- ii. **Requests the Constitutional Subcommittee to undertake a thorough review of the Code of Conduct with a view to making recommendation to Council by July 2016.**

16. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW BRAY PARISH - APPROVAL OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

Members considered approval of the draft the Terms of Reference for a Community Governance Review of Bray Parish and the area known as The Fisheries which was currently outside Bray Parish area in Oldfield Ward.

The Returning Officer addressed Council to explain that the process to be followed was a national process and was detailed in the report. A series of two month periods of consultation would take place. Any changes were not needed until the next parish elections, which were some years away anyway.

Councillor M. Airey commented that the report was simply requesting council to follow due process following the receipt of a valid petition.

Councillor Mrs Hunt left the meeting at 9.32pm.

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Councillor Coppinger stated that as the longest serving ex Bray Parish Councillor he knew the emotive concern for the Fisheries. Whilst the council was being asked to approve the process, this had been driven by residents.

Councillor Beer commented that urban areas could become parished areas if a petition of just ten members was presented, which would prompt a referendum.

It was proposed by Councillor M. Airey, seconded by Councillor Coppinger, and:

### **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council agrees:**

- i) to conduct a review of Bray Parish in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.**
- ii) the details outlined in the Terms of Reference and publishes these so that the review can begin.**
- iii) to conduct the review in accordance with the timetable set out, and that if the outcome of the review is that it is recommended to support the inclusion of the area of the Fisheries into Bray Parish, a Reorganisation Order will be made to bring the changes into effect in May 2019 at the next Parish elections.**

### 17. 2015/16 BUDGET DECISIONS: ADULTS SOCIAL CARE

Members considered a request to recast the 2015-16 Revenue Budget to reflect the additional unplanned expenditure currently being incurred in Adults Social Care.

Councillor Dudley explained that a number of councils across the country had encountered difficulties in the course of the financial year, leading to a significant overspend. It was therefore proposed to add an additional £2.084m be added to protect the most vulnerable residents. He was confident this would address the full-year out-turn situation. Without prudent finances this would have presented the borough with significant issues; the council was in a better position than others that it was able to recast the budget. Budget setting for 2016-17 had already built in a minimum of £3m for Adult Social Care.

Councillor Dudley explained that £600,000 would come from savings in the Operations directorate; he congratulated the Director. A further £1.484m would come from the Development Fund. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was a revenue expenditure which went through the council's accounts in order to assist with paying debt in the future. Fortunately it was not necessary that the council incurred the ongoing revenue charge because of significant assets the council could realise, in particular land holdings.

Councillor McWilliams commented that in the autumn statement the government had suggested that councils could raise additional funding for adult social care by increasing council tax. Council tax was regressive. In this borough the strong economy and strong processes had mitigated the need to increase council tax.

Councillor Ilyas, as Chairman of the Adult Services & Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel, warmly welcomed the injection of additional funds. Making accurate forecasts was not an easy task. The country was extremely fortunate to have the NHS which was successful due to the hard work and dedication of its workers. Due to this the population had better health and lived longer. Those who were less fortunate relied on

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Adult Social Care services for a better quality of life. The borough had made necessary provisions through the expertise of officers and the Lead Member. He wholeheartedly supported the recommendations for all residents.

Councillor Mrs Jones stated that she completely supported the proposals. However, on page 218 of the budget proposal for 2015/16 was a graph produced by the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance. It indicated that, as far as to 2019/20, central funding would continue to reduce and the costs relating to Adult Social Care would continue to rise. At the time she highlighted that the Independent Commission indicated further central government funding reductions and cost growth and it had called into question the decision to cut council tax. Her comment had been 'With the budget detail noting these risks, would it not be more prudent to freeze council tax, still collect the freeze bonus and not put additional unnecessary pressure on both officers and services?' There were senior officers that now spent an inordinate amount of time trying to achieve savings targets set by the administration.

When she had mentioned this in her response at the budget debate she had been told that she was full of doom and gloom and that despite her negativity the council had always delivered. This time it had not delivered a balanced and achievable budget; the council was now forecasting an overspend in Adult Services of £2.8m .

The government had given the go ahead for councils to implement a 2% council tax rise next year to cover the demographic growth in Adult Social Care, this would be equate to £1.2m, not enough to cover the shortfall. She had recently been told (on Twitter) that if she did not want to support over £2m investment in vulnerable adults then she should vote against it. Her issue was that the money should have been in the budget in the first place. Council Members ignored the Independent Commission's information, implemented a £1.3 million revenue reduction and was now having to mitigate against that decision. She asked for reassurance that this would not happen again in the next budget round.

Councillor Burbage commented that it was difficult to budget exactly in areas with high volatility. Despite repeated ability to make savings it had been rare that the council had collected too little tax rather than too much. The council had prudent reserves and finances.

It was proposed by Councillor Dudley and seconded by Councillor McWilliams and:

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council agree an additional £2.084m to be added to the 2015-16 Revenue Budget for Adult Social Care to be funded by the virement of:**

1. **£600k budget from the Operations Directorate (representing the current projected underspend).**
2. **£1.484m from the Councils Development Fund. (Details of the Fund in Appendix A)**

### 18. COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

Members considered approval of the Council's Strategic Plan 2016-2020. Councillor Bathurst explained that it was five and half years since the last plan had been

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produced, when resident satisfaction with services had been less than 80%. In five years the council had cut £45.8m from council tax bills and put that money back into the economy. At the same time satisfaction levels had risen to almost 90%.

Councillors C and S Rayner left the meeting at 9.55pm.

Councillor Bathurst highlighted that the plan detailed how the council would act to deliver the four strategic objectives. Councillor Targowska commented that the document clearly set out commitments to residents. Councillor Brimacombe commented that the plan needed to last a long time therefore it needed a rigid framework to be useful but flexible enough to be relevant. He felt the document before Members achieves this balance.

It was proposed by Councillor Bathurst and seconded by Councillor Targowska and:

### **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council:**

- i. Approve the near final draft Council Strategic Plan 2016-2020 and**
- ii. Delegates authority to the Managing Director and Leader of the Council in consultation with the Principal Member for Policy to make final minor alterations to the plan as may be necessary.**

### 19. DELEGATION OF PLANNING FUNCTIONS WITHIN BRAY PARISH

Members considered the establishment of a Bray Parish Development Control Sub-Committee to consider certain types of planning application made within Bray Parish for a 12 month period. Councillor Burbage explained that at the moment the parish could decide in favour of an application only for a borough officer to turn it down in private. Decision making was better in the hands of people who had been elected to serve their local residents. A sub committee of borough Parish Councillors would be created for this purpose.

Councillor D. Wilson supported the idea of delegation to the local level. He highlighted that the call-in facility would remain in place. He was aware that Cox Green was also keen to be receive delegated powers.

Councillor Werner gave his conditional support to the proposal. He asked who would bear the costs of lost appeals. Councillor M. Airey commented as Vice Chairman of Planning at Bray Parish Council this had been done to promote a greater understanding for parish councillors as to why the borough may overturn a decision of the parish. Councillor Hilton commented that he had tried to get his parish (Sunninghill and Ascot) interested but there was a clear fear factor. A pilot may help overcome this issue. An analysis of decisions made on small householder applications showed there were very few difference between the parish recommendation and the final decision. Councillor Burbage agreed with this and commented that there was scope for more than just householder applications. The costs were the same as when the borough turned down an application and it went to appeal. By definition the applications to be considered were small and unlikely to have lengthy appeal processes.

It was proposed by Councillor Burbage and seconded by Councillor D. Wilson, and:

### **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council:**

- i. **Approve the principles of delegation for an initial 12 month period and the basis of the establishment of the Bray Sub-Committee**
- ii. **Delegate to Constitution Sub-Committee the ability to agree the final details the Sub-Committee including the ability to extend the duration of the term and any consequent changes to the Constitution and**
- iii. **Approve suspension of the political balance rules in respect of the Bray Parish Sub-Committee**

20. CONTINUATION OF MEETING

At this point in the meeting, and in accordance with Rule of Procedure Part 4A 23.1 of the Council's Constitution, the Mayor called for a vote in relation to whether or not the meeting should continue, as the time had exceeded 10.00pm.

**RESOLVED: That the meeting should continue.**

**40 Councillors voted in favour of the motion – Councillors Michael Airey, Natasha Airey, Malcolm Alexander, Christine Bateson, George Bathurst, Hashim Bhatti, Phillip Bicknell, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, David Burbage, Stuart Carroll, Gerald Clark, John Collins, David Coppinger, Simon Dudley, Marius Gilmore, Jesse Grey, Geoffrey Hill, David Hilton, Mohammed Ilyas, Richard Kellaway, John Lenton, Sayonara Luxton, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Nicola Pryer, Eileen Quick, Jack Rankin, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Hari Sharma, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John Story, Claire Stretton, Lisa Targowska, Derek Wilson, Ed Wilson and Lynda Yong.**

**Three councillors voted against the motion – Councillors Beer, Mrs Jones and Werner.**

21. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

**a) Question submitted by Councillor Pryer to Councillor Cox, Lead Member for Environmental Services**

Puppy Farming has received significant media coverage recently, I am sure Members will join me in never condoning such businesses that are operated with little, or no, regard for the health and welfare of the puppies or their parents but with the main intent of making a profit. Is the council aware of any such premises operating within the Borough?

Councillor Alexander, on behalf of Councillor Cox, responded that he absolutely supported the position of not condoning such cruel businesses. the Environmental Health team had confirmed that they were unaware of any puppy farm businesses being operated within the Royal Borough. There was currently one licensed dog breeder located in the area and seven licensed animal boarding establishments.

Councillor Pryer confirmed she did not wish to ask a supplementary question.

**b) Question submitted by Councillor E. Wilson to Councillor Cox, Lead**



**Member for Environmental Services**

What steps will be taken to ensure that those who litter our streets in Dedworth are caught and fined accordingly?

Councillor Alexander, on behalf of Councillor Cox, responded that he could confirm that the council's Community Wardens currently undertook patrols across the Borough (including Dedworth) and did issue fixed penalty notices where littering was evidenced. Wardens would continue to work alongside councillors in Dedworth and Members generally across the area to tackle environmental issues and ensure the Royal Borough remained a good place to live and visit.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor E. Wilson commented that in correspondence with officers, he had not received a conclusion on allocation of resources.

Councillor Alexander responded that as Deputy Lead Member he would be happy to take this on and ensure a conclusion was reached.

22. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

- a) **Members noted that Councillor Dr L Evans had withdrawn her motion.**
- b) **By Councillor Smith:**

It was proposed by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Dudley, and:

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council resolves to:**

- **update the Open Space Audit, which was last published in 2008, and identify actions for the future;**
- **include a feature on the various RBWM-operated open spaces in Around The Royal Borough to raise awareness;**
- **continue to market and promote spaces in all parts of the Royal Borough that are open to the public.**

The meeting, which started at 6.30 pm, ended at 10.10 pm.