

**AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Desborough Suite -
Town Hall on Tuesday, 21st February, 2017**

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Sayonara Luxton), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor John Lenton) and

Councillors Mike Airey, Natasha Airey, Malcolm Alexander, Christine Bateson, Malcolm Beer, Phillip Bicknell, Hashim Bhatti, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, David Burbage, Stuart Carroll, Gerald Clark, David Coppinger, Carwyn Cox, Judith Diment, Simon Dudley, David Evans, Dr Lilly Evans, Marius Gilmore, Jesse Grey, Geoff Hill, David Hilton, Charles Hollingsworth, Maureen Hunt, Mohammed Ilyas, Lynne Jones, Philip Love, Ross McWilliams, Marion Mills, Eileen Quick, Jack Rankin, Colin Rayner, Samantha Rayner, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Hari Sharma, Derek Sharp, Julian Sharpe, Adam Smith, John Story, Simon Werner, Derek Wilson, Ed Wilson and Lynda Yong.

Officers: Rob Stubbs, Rob Large, Russell O'Keefe, Alison Alexander, David Scott, Mary Kilner, Shauna Hichens and Andy Jeffs

111. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Collins, Kellaway, Lion, Majeed, Pryer, Shelim, Stretton, Targowska and Walters.

112. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 be approved.

113. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor D. Evans declared a personal interest in the item 'Land at Rear of Boulters Lock Car Park' as he was a friend of one of the individuals involved in the Boulters Riverside CIC. He left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Sharma declared a prejudicial interest in the item 'Land at Rear of Boulters Lock Car Park' as a member of the Hindu Society of Maidenhead. He made representations, then left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Bullock declared an interest in the item 'Land at Rear of Boulters Lock Car Park'. He remained in the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item, but abstained.

Alison Alexander declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the item 'Appointment of Statutory Officers' as she was being considered for appointment. She left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

The Monitoring Officer advised Members that they were not required to declare an interest in the item 'Land at Rear of Boulters Lock Car Park' merely by virtue of the fact that they were a Member or Substitute Member of the Maidenhead Development

Management Panel (MDMP). The property decision was distinct and different to any subsequent consideration of a planning application on the site by the MDMP.

114. 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. She highlighted the Lions Club lunch for senior citizens in particular.

115. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

a) Stephen Smart of Maidenhead Riverside asked the Lead Member for Economic Development and Property the following question:

The Council has said it will only consider offers for the land adjacent to Boulter's Lock Car Park only if the proposal is for a community use. Why did it impose that condition?

Councillor Rankin responded that he welcomed the opportunity to discuss and debate the land at the rear of Boulter's Lock Car Park. For some time the Royal Borough had been in discussion with the Hindu Society of Maidenhead to help identify a site where they could realise their ambition to build a community centre. The Borough was in discussion with the Hindu Society, culminating last year for the site in question. When the potential lease started to move into the stage for Member input, it became clear in August 2016 that the lease did not have unanimous support amongst all residents.

The process had therefore been opened up in September 2016 so other interested community groups could have an opportunity to bid. The decision was taken to allow groups to bid on the same basis so the council would have comparable bids following the conclusion of the process. Residents wrote in who preferred that the land was not developed in any way or preferred expanding car park provision. As such and to aid transparency, today Members would consider all options that had been put to the council.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Smart asked, if the council had said it was not considering any other options, why it was intending to sell land that was adjacent to Boyn Grove Community Centre to three neighbouring home owners? Why was the option of the land adjoining, opposite the car park, on a conditional basis which would potentially offer the best return for the least effort and impact, not part of the debate this evening?

Councillor Rankin responded that he was not aware of the details of the site being referred to and would write to Mr Smart with an answer.

b) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill ward asked the Lead Member for Planning the following question:

At the Windsor public meeting you stated that all land in the local plan had been checked for availability and deliverability. However two residents have contacted RBWM saying their land was included *without* their knowledge. Why does the council choose to check availability and deliverability with only speculative proposers of such sites rather than with the actual land owners themselves?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that he could confirm that the sites allocated in the Regulation 18 Local Plan were based on evidence of availability collected through what was called a 'call for sites' process. This was when the planning authority asked for landowners, developers and agents to put their sites forward if they were interested in making them available for development, it was done once a year. Between the call for sites and consultation it was not unusual for changes in site availability. One of the reasons for a major consultation was to identify which sites were still available. In Windsor certain sites were now not available and they would need to be removed from the next draft. The local planning authority had been contacting land owners to re-confirm that their land remained available for development.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Hill said that at the same meeting Councillor D. Wilson had stated that the Planning Inspector in 2007 had rejected the original Local Plan in part for want of a green belt review and on 3 November the Planning Inspector had advised the council to meet its entire need within its boundaries. In the House of Commons greenbelt briefing the Planning Minister Nick Bowles MP was quoted as saying to the Planning Inspectorate 'emphasise that it was for the local authority to choose to review its green belt land and it should not be for the Planning Inspector to recommend at examination stage; it was always transparently clear that it should be the local authority itself that had chosen the path'. Had the borough freely chosen the path of the green belt review or was this forced on the council by the Planning Inspectorate?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that in 2007 the Examiner had made it clear that green belt boundaries needed to be reviewed to accommodate growth. The council had taken this on board. There were always changes to legislation, it was a continually evolving process. On 3 November 2016 at a meeting with DCLG and the Planning Inspector it was made quite clear that the council had to meet its objectively assessed need within its boundaries and their recommendation was to meet it 100%.

c) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill ward asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

At the Windsor public meeting you announced that the Council was exploring using Community Land Trusts to give young and (provably) local people truly affordable housing with long-term price rise capping. A great idea. Will you therefore support the placing of ALL Borough owned local plan sites into CLT's to permanently solve our town's housing crisis?

Councillor Dudley responded that CLTs could take many forms, for example putting land into a trust only available for people with a significant connection to the borough. In addition the price would be at a significant discount to the current open market price. The ratio of median salary to house prices in the borough was 12.5 times compared to 8 times in the south east. If a property was purchased as part of a CLT, it could only be sold at a price increased by the equivalent growth in median wages. The idea was something the borough would look at post the adoption of the Borough Local Plan when it would bring forward a new Affordable Housing Policy. The idea of a CLT for land on the golf course would be looked into. The borough had received a £100,000 grant from central government to explore the establishment of a CLT; a report would be presented to the next meeting of the Cabinet Regeneration Sub

Committee. In answer to the question, the council would not be placing all land in a CLT because this constrained the value realisation, but the idea would be explored.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Hill referred to an article in The Independent on Sunday that stated a number of councils felt obliged to set up private trading companies, as had the borough. The article also said that the government white paper included in the small print extending the Right to Buy into private companies. He asked if this would be a problem. Additionally, would the fact that properties could only be sold or developed in a manner which befits the local community cause any problems?

Councillor Dudley responded that from a policy perspective the council was supportive of the Right to Buy. It would want to replenish the housing stock from Housing Associations which were subject to the Right to Buy; this would affect the borough's property company. He highlighted that no Member was a Director of either trading company, to avoid any perception of conflict. The CLT concept was exciting. If legislation affected the Right to Buy into the borough's property company, that was a good thing.

d) Mick Jarvis of Maidenhead Riverside asked the following question of the Lead Member for Economic Development and Property:

On September 7th Councillor Rankin wrote to Riverside residents advising his department had concluded that using the land adjacent to Boulters Lock car park for additional parking was uneconomic. On October 25th in an email to a resident Councillor Rankin admitted the existing economic analysis was inadequate:

"I accept that this is hardly a rigorous parking study."

Can Councillor Rankin now confirm that the economic analysis on which Council is being asked to decide the use of the land in question for the next 125 years is fit for purpose, is capable of withstanding robust challenge and based on realistic assumptions providing Council with a sound basis for making a decision?

Councillor Rankin responded that in September 2016 some residents requested that the land adjacent to Boulters Lock car park be developed to extend the car park. As such he asked that a piece of work be done to investigate the economic basis for doing so and the Property team approached the parking team for a high level piece of work.

The NPV analysis assumed a £240,000 capital cost to construct and then showed an ongoing net income of around £5,000 per year rising with inflation. The £240,000 figure came from the parking team based on their experience and the £5,000 per year assumed fee charging as was and that current occupancy levels were maintained in percentage terms. The discount rate was 4.12%. On that basis the net present value of extending the car park was minus £140,000.

The assumptions were challenged by some residents who fairly raised a belief that occupancy rates would increase with the opening of the bridge and the new development on the other side of the river. Whilst he agreed that this was a factor going forward, the council had no quantitative measure of this and his comment was accepting that the analysis was, as ever, only as good as the inputs; the analysis did not pretend to address changing utilisation rates.

Nevertheless today, transparently and in public, Council could decide to develop a car park from an amenity point of view, but it remained true that developing the land as car park was uneconomic. If Council took the view that occupancy may increase in the future it could choose to hold the land, retaining the ability to convert to car parking in the future.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Jarvis commented that Riverside residents were confused. The parking analysis was exactly the same in detail to the one widely criticised and had been described by the Lead Member as 'hardly rigorous'. Mr Jarvis asked what had changed since September 2016 to make the Lead Member now believe it was valid?

Councillor Rankin responded that he had presented the analysis as a product of the assumptions made, including fees and utilisation rates. The challenge from some residents was that they believed utilisation rates would increase in future. This may be true but the council did not have a quantitative measure for this. The Council needed to take into account if occupancy rates were likely to rise but in his view it could not develop a car park today based on the current figures.

e) Mick Jarvis of Maidenhead Riverside asked the following question of the Lead Member for Economic Development and Property:

Boulter's Riverside CIC submitted a bid for the land adjacent to the Boulter's Lock car park on October 20th 2016 as required by Councillor Rankin's department. On that date a competing bid from the Hindu Society of Maidenhead of £73,000 was in place but the Hindu Society had the right to increase their bid.

Was the Hindu Society bid increased, was any such increased bid made contemporaneously with and on the same terms and conditions as the bid from Boulter's Riverside CIC and if not on what date was any bid in excess of £73,000 made by the Hindu Society?

Councillor Rankin responded that the first paragraph in Mr Jarvis' question was correct. The Hindu Society did not increase their bid on or before 20 October 2016 which was the deadline which applied equally to all groups. He had received a phone call afterwards from the Hindu Society to say they would financially match any competing bids. This would not be considered because it did not comply with the timetable. The paper showed the bid at £73,000.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Jarvis commented that the CIC understood the council had not committed to accept the highest bid but the difference between 73,000 and £101,000 was considerable. The borough website said 'the disposal of surplus assets is a major source of income for the borough and vital for achieving its strategic aims and objectives'. As Lead Member for Economic Development and Property he would presumably endorse this view. If so, given there were now two community bids both proposing community use could the CIC expect him to support acceptance of the higher bid, which was the only bid offering an important lease back option for the council. Would he agree that the offer from the resident's CIC would give the people of Maidenhead the best deal?

Councillor Rankin responded that he would not be taking a view; the details were in the report. Finance was one of the metrics Council could use in making its decision.

116. PETITIONS

The following petition was presented by Councillor C. Rayner:

'We the residents of Horton and Wraysbury ask the RBWM council to carry on funding the 305 bus route until 31/8/17. To give time for both villages and the RBWM council to come up with transport solution to get our children to school and our residents to the doctors and to Staines. We thank the RBWM for funding the bus service 305 from the 31/8/2016 when Surrey CC without notice withdrew its funding over night to this bus route.'

Councillor Rayner addressed the meeting to summarise the content of the petition. He explained that the petition had come about when bus users were told by the bus driver that the bus was stopping on 31 March 2017 due to the subsidy being withdrawn. The Lead Member for Highways and Transport then confirmed to him that Surrey County Council had withdrawn the subsidy on 31 August 2016. The borough had stepped in to subsidise the service until 31 March 2017. The Lead Member promised he would seek a solution. The request was for the council to continue to subsidise the service until 31 August 2017 so that the council, parish council and local charities could come up with a solution to resolve the issue.

The Mayor ruled that the petition should be referred to the Lead Member/Head of Service for consideration, with the lead petitioner reserving the right to request a debate at Full Council, given the number of signatories was over 1000, if a resolution could not be found.

Councillor Werner joined the meeting at 8.03pm.

117. BUDGET 2017/18

Members considered the council budget for 2017/18. Councillor Saunders Lead Member for Finance, explained that the complex wheels of central government meant that he needed to amend the recommendations as presented in the agenda. The government was reasonably expected to have finalised the parliamentary process for confirming the Local Government Settlement. However, the final decisions had been made but not yet formally published. Therefore, he proposed adding the following additional recommendation:

'The Head of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance be authorised to amend the budget to reflect the final local government settlement once announced and to notify the council in due course of any subsequent financial changes.'

The Lead Member highlighted that 94% of Councils expected to increase their council tax next year. This figure had risen steadily over recent years, starting from relatively few councils. Next year, for the first time, the borough was joining the overwhelming majority, with a 0.95% increase, or £8.62 for a Band D home or 17p per week. This was less than half the limit of 1.99% being added by a majority of councils. It was worth noting that most of the very few who did not expect to increase Council Tax next year had much lower than average older residents and significantly less pressure on their Adult Care Services.

All were keenly aware of the growing needs of older residents for health and adult care services and the likelihood these would continue to rise. After the coming year

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there was a clear need for the funding of these services to be addressed at national level from progressive taxation. Meantime, councils had been asked to fund the services from local Adult Social Care Levies added onto council tax bills, 2% last year and 3% more this year, for a Band D home, £18.14 this year and £45.89 next year.

Many residents would not resent paying the levy to fund £3m of additional adult social care services next year, while others, a total increase in Council Tax and Adult Social Care Levy of 3.95% was uncomfortable - £54.51 for a Band D household or £1.05 per week. For some it would simply be too much, which was why the borough was continuing to only charge 10% of the normal bill to households that simply could not afford to pay, reducing their increase from £54.51 to £5.45 or 10.5p per week. Many Councils were increasing the 10% charge to vulnerable households, some to as high as 25%. It could not be right for those in the greatest need to be taxed more, not less.

Other Councils were seeking to balance their books by increasing the fees and charges they received for everything from green waste collection to residential care, from marriage registrations to library charges, increasing them by substantially more than the reference inflation of 2%. The borough did not subscribe to such back door taxation, so fees and charges had either not increased, had increased by up to 2%, or, if the increase proposed by the relevant officers was more than 2%, this was carefully scrutinised and justified, often by comparison to much higher charges of nearby councils.

Capital investments continued to thrive, feeding the critical expansion of secondary schools, fuelling the regeneration of Maidenhead with additional public parking and a new leisure centre and making York House the accessible home for activities in Windsor.

The Maidenhead regeneration would bring significant benefits for investors in the town, one of the largest of which was residents, with the prospect of very significant developments on five major sites owned by the council. All reasonable expectations and advice indicated this would generate capital receipts in excess of £150m. It was this rational forecast which would repay the short term borrowing of £73m for strategic and tactical capital investments over the next two years, and likely also repay the £50 plus million of debt inherited from the previous administration in 2006.

The Lead Member thanked all of the leading officer teams and his Cabinet colleagues, who together had crafted the budget, with the expert coordination of the Head of Finance and Chief Accountant in the Finance Team. The 0.95% increase in Council Tax and 3% increase in Adult Social Care Levy were the logical and legitimate outcome of many weeks of dedicated effort and considerable expertise. The savings, revenue and capital budgets which the officers proposed with their Lead Members were assembled and after detailed scrutiny, Members had arrived at the proposal before Council.

In relation to those who felt the increases next year were the inevitable outcome of allegedly incompetent cutting in the past, the Lead Member commented that this was clearly silly. The lead officers and Members of the council had achieved an extraordinary transformation of the council over the last eight years, consistently delivering more for less. The council did not tax residents more over the last seven years because it did not need the money, so instead council tax was reduced by 32.5% less in real terms.

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However, he was aware that some felt that the professional, prudent and effective management of services had given back to residents taxes they would rather had been paid to the borough to keep it fully funded in line with inflation. Anyone who felt this way was invited to pay what they had saved into the charity scheme. A Band D household would need to pay £1676.10 to match the money they had kept in their pocket over the eight years including next year. If they were also happy to pay the Adult Services Care Levy as well, the amount was £1,740.13.

The Lead Member was delighted that the Council was adding £160,000 to the grants available for voluntary organisations. The extended deadline to apply for this additional funding was the end of the week and although the council had already received many new applications, he wanted to ensure no-one missed out, so they should contact him to ensure their application was carefully considered.

Councillor Jones, Opposition Leader, thanked officers for their hard work to produce the budget, and to the Head of Finance, the Finance team and Directors for the time they had given her to discuss certain aspects and the evidence base of the budget. She also thanked Councillor Saunders for giving up some of his time.

As Leader of the Opposition her role was to provide a response to the budget. The definition of 'Opposition' was antagonists, enemies, adversaries, conflict, clash, polarity. However she saw her role, and that of any elected councillor whether aligned with the political administration or not, to challenge, examine, question in a constructive and non biased way, to be a check and balance, answerable to the residents. This should not be an opportunity for her to stand up and oppose the budget for the sake of it, or for others to throw 'metaphorical sponges' back at her. She was appreciative that this year the council had an officer led budget and that the budget added up, which was always a good start.

The budget for 2017/18 allowed for an increase to council tax of £36.37 for a Band D property, approximately twice the increase estimated last year in the MTFP. With this increase, council tax in the borough would be £961.46 and with future demands an estimated £1055.74 in three year's time. The Net budget requirement forecast increased from £60.7m (last year) to £73.4m (in 20/21). That was a £31.8million pound increase in funds required in four years but with the increases in council tax and Adult Social Care Levy the council would have a balanced budget

The take up of the Adult Social Care Levy was justified. Both the numbers accessing ASC, and the total cost of the care provided, had increased over the last three years. She agreed with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member that the 'demand led' increases in Adult Social Care should not be funded at local authority level but that did not take away that it had been proven that the administration had been too optimistic in their forecasting of achievable savings and estimating increasing costs in the past.

In her response to the budget of 15/16 she had highlighted the fact that there was no increase in funding to allow for more resources for the borough local plan. Last year she again detailed the extra £300,000 taken from reserves to fund the planning function but it was not considered necessary to increase the budget. The council had overspent the planning budget consistently over the last four years: in 13/14 by £194,000, in 14/15 by £291,000 and in 15/16 by £629,000.

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The front page summary highlighted increased investment for effective delivery of the Borough Local Plan and the handling of planning applications. Between 2012 and 2015 the administration took £630,000 out of the budget for the planning department, majorly as a result of the restructure, a restructure that reduced the size of the planning department at a time when the council was well aware of the impact of producing a Borough Local Plan and also an increase in planning applications. This was not increased investment but replacing what should have been there anyway and an area of underfunding that she had consistently highlighted.

Some of the items highlighted for increased investment such as expansion of schools, York House redevelopment, parking and leisure centres were financed from central government grants, developer contributions and borrowing and did not impact on council tax apart from interest on borrowing. Other items such as 'maintaining the quality of public trees' were to ensure the council was responsibly inspecting its trees on a rolling basis according to policy. This was not increased investment, rather it was ensuring funding was in the base budget as it should be.

The National Apprentice Levy of £280,000, 0.5% of payroll, suffered by the council was the gross amount charged by central government. Of this, £130,000 would apparently be passed on to the maintained schools. This may be correct but could not be considered fair. Most of the schools were small community schools that were already seeing their funding being cut and with staffing costs regularly reaching 85% of their budget, she felt the council would want to 'top slice' the money from small primary and first schools.

All were seeing a huge adjustment to the way the council operated, moving to a commissioning body. In some areas the council would be in partnership with other councils, still have a controlling interest and a direct line of control; in other areas it will be contract based. She was not convinced the council was out of the cycle of non achievable, or as Councillor Saunders had previously referred to, 'fatuous' savings. Some proposals had been backed by a quantifiable and substantial evidence base but others that were moving forward had been lacking in the details that would allow the challenge, questioning, scrutiny that was the responsibility of all councillors. She felt the words 'well I trust the officers' was not a justification or excuse for abdicating responsibility.

The Highways department was being outsourced. There were areas, those that were routine, that lent themselves to a contract. Other areas were not so easily quantified. To place them all in one big pot without addressing the differences in how they operated, without, in her view, presenting the evidence of savings made against possible risks for each individual area, did not allow the scrutiny, the challenge and the transparency for which councillors were responsible. Councillor Jones was concerned whether the estimated savings being generated by outsourcing were viable and whether to achieve savings the council was losing in-house expertise that would ensure continuity of services in the outsourced areas.

The council had some important decisions to make going forward, that would impact on the budget. The council now needed to borrow to fund the year on year capital program. Councillor Jones agreed that, with the amount of development indicated on council owned land, the council should see substantial income being generated for the council that would increase reserves in the future. The decision was whether to accept the one off payment for the land or borrow further to invest, as a partner in the

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developments, and accept the added cost of borrowing and the added risks of being a developer to hopefully generate additional income going forward.

Councillor Jones explained that in the past she had not supported the budget proposals because they were obviously dictated by a political wish to cut tax above all else, but the mistakes of previous budgets could not, and should not, influence her response to the proposed one. The proposed budget had more substance and more evidence base although some assumptions of savings seemed to lack detailed justification. Last year she requested a commitment from the administration that would justify her supporting the budget, which was not given, therefore she had abstained. Her 3 requests were a commitment to:

- reconsider the increase in parking charges, which was done within 2 months
- put detail into the funding of community wardens; this was still not done but the decision to outsource was reversed
- ensure that funding was in place so that the planning department had adequate resources to deliver a prompt service to the residents and also to deliver the Borough Local Plan. She was pleased that this had been addressed in the proposed budget

This year her request was that the council looked again at the decision to pass on the Apprentice Levy to small community schools.

As long as there was transparent monitoring of outsourcing contracts against a detailed baseline at regular intervals and challenge and scrutiny was provided by all Councillors and accepted by Lead Members, then she believed the budget was the most realistic that the administration had presented at Council.

Councillor Sharma commented that the council was cutting taxes but not services. The council was spending more each year on the transport system, which was better than neighbouring councils. He referred to cross county services such as the Maidenhead to Heathrow service. In a similar situation to the bus service petition discussed earlier, if other councils stopped subsidising the service, the council had to step in. The borough was the only council to provide 24 hour bus pass access to its services.

Councillor Rankin commented that he had been in the fortunate position to have been involved in the creation of the budget and wanted to express his admiration and thanks for the professionalism and dedication of officers and Members in its crafting. This was a budget that protected vulnerable residents and invested significant capital in the regeneration of Maidenhead, whilst the Royal Borough remained a low tax council.

Naturally with the revaluation nationally and the regeneration of Maidenhead, next year may be challenging for local businesses and he wished to talk about the changes to business rates policy locally that the council was implementing to ease those transitions and support beyond. Currently through the local discretionary rate relief policy, which came into effect in April 2016, the Royal Borough could discount retail premises that had been empty for 12 months or more, who would receive up to 100% relief on their business rates. The council had been using this effectively to support retail businesses and this year he was pleased the council was expanding this to include commercial and industrial premises from 1 April 2017. Business would be able to apply for relief for three months and six months for these premises respectively. Further, the council would continue to provide

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relief for charitable causes, in instances of hardship and to support rural community facilities in the year ahead.

Councillor Dudley welcomed the challenge from the Leader of the Opposition. He respected the fact that she and Councillor Beer regularly attended Cabinet and he welcomed their constructive input. The borough was a low council tax council; it had the lowest council tax outside London despite higher adult care services demand. Other councils had taken money to put in reserves, the borough had not. This was a new phase for the council. The borough was incredibly fortunate to have significant property assets but these would be realised over the next decade. The proposed budget represented the strategic decision to invest and adequately fund services. The change of approach was to ensure the most vulnerable were protected. 1700 residents were aged over 90 and this figure was expected to rise to 2100 by 2020. If 25% required care at a cost of £30,000 per person this equated to £3m, or 5-6% of council tax. The council knew it had to create financial environment to protect services.

Councillor Bateson commented that council tax had been cut in real terms by 32% since 2007. This was quite an achievement especially when other councils were cutting services or reduce grant funding. The borough had done the opposite, opening more services and increasing the grants budget by £160,000. In Ascot and the Sunnings safer routes to school was a major commitment including pedestrian lights under a bridge and a bridge over the Windle stream.

Councillor Bicknell thanked Councillor Jones. His department had struggled to explain how the £400,000 saving through Delivering Differently would work to the benefit of residents. He highlighted that Volker was a large organisation with a £100m turnover and contracts with numerous local authorities. The proposal would improve resilience, continuity and sustainability particularly in terms of sickness or leave. The council had been remiss in not spending money on tree maintenance but £100,000 was now being included in the budget for the next four years to put this right. He would arrange a meeting for Members to met the new faces at Volker.

Councillor Brimacombe commented that the path to the budget was well documented; the Lead Member had attended all Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Audit and Performance Review Panel (APRP) and with officers answered all Member questions. The savings totalling £5.9m had a well documented path from the transformation strategy. The Directors had been in front of the APRP to explain their transformation initiatives.

Councillor D. Evans commented that the budget further reinforced the council's determination to build a new town for all residents. The council had taken a strategic decision to borrow as an investment for young people to be able to live in the town centre. A Joint Venture partner would be announced later in the year, with over 1500 new residences planned to bring vitality to the town centre. He welcomed funding for the Nicholson's car park to link it with The Landing and existing shopping centre. As the town was regenerated, the council needed to ensure businesses remained open therefore the budget included up to £9m for additional and temporary parking.

Councillor N. Airey highlighted that Children's Services had identified a number of savings through back office efficiencies and deleting of vacant posts and proposed significant investment including:

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- £300,000 investment in Home to School Transport following a full review
- Three additional social workers as demand in the MASH increased
- £28m in the capital programme across 25 projects including heating at All Saints and expansion at Windsor Girl's School

In relation to the apprenticeship levy she highlighted that if the council took on the cost it would need to find funding elsewhere. The council would work with schools to support them to grow talent, for example a bursar role.

Councillor Coppinger highlighted that alongside the growth in demand for adult services, young people with severe mental and physical needs were now living longer, which was a wonderful thing but required help at a cost of £100,000 per year per person. The precept would ensure enough funding was available and no services would be cut for the fourth year running. He questioned reporting of a £13m black hole, which was not possible as a balanced budget had been produced. Councillor Coppinger highlighted that the council's adult services were moving into a joint arrangements with Wokingham which would provide benefits of scale.

Councillor S Rayner highlighted plans for the new Braywick leisure centre which would support improvements in physical health and mental wellbeing. Unlike other councils the borough was investing in libraries, in Old Windsor and the new hub system. She proposed an amendment to the budget to remove the resident burial fees for infants and children up to the age of 18 years of age, which she felt were inappropriate.

Councillor Saunders accepted the amendment.

Councillor Beer commented that he had been involved as a council representative in lobbying Heathrow to provide a subsidy for the Series 7 bus service to reduce car traffic around the airport. He commented that recommendation ix) should refer to Thames Valley Police and the Environment agency as well as RBFRS as they also charged precepts. Councillor Beer also raise a concern that since the Arthur Jacobs Nature Centre had been run by a specialist contractor, nothing had been heard. He saw nothing relating to this in the budget. He also could not find any reference to how the increase in community Wardens from 18 to 36 would be funded. Councillor Beer also questioned how the customer contact centre would be improved when a £96,000 saving was being made.

Councillor Werner commented that agreeing to a budget was like signing to say you agreed with everything, and objecting was like saying you hated it all. There had been improvements in the budget making process but he still had some concerns. The budget was predicated on too many things where detail had not been given, or on issues such as CCTV and the green belt where decisions had not yet been made. He would therefore abstain.

Councillor Hill explained that the £96,000 saving in the customer contact centre was a result of smart sourcing, but that this process would only start once AfC and Optalis were in full flow. He commented that calls answered under 1 minute were at 79.4% against a target of 80% and first time resolution was at 89% against a target of 83%.

Councillor Saunders commented that he was very grateful for Councillor Jones' support for the substance of the budget and he very much respected the scrutiny she

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offered to him and his colleagues. He then picked out highlights from other Councillor's speeches:

He was pleased that Councillor Sharma had found the budget supported his aspirations to support effective public transport. Councillor Rankin highlighted the extended business rate reliefs the council was promoting to help local businesses. Councillor Dudley painted the clear vision which had set the challenging course with a compass which would keep the council true to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable. Councillor Bateson had echoed his delight that the council would grant £160,000 more to voluntary organisations around the Borough. He thanked Councillor Bicknell for his determination to address issues which may have been overlooked and to pursue the further transformation in Highways. Councillor Brimacombe paid respect to the transparency and scrutiny which had brought the council to the proposed budget. Councillor D. Evans demonstrated that the budget fuelled the much needed Nicholson's Car Park expansion. Councillor N. Airey reminded Members of the investments in one of the most important roles, the social workers who supported some of our most seriously vulnerable. Councillor Coppinger remained proud that the council continued not to cut services and meet the needs of vulnerable elderly residents. Councillor Rayner had demonstrated how the council was both tackling big projects like the new leisure centre and focusing on those most in need of care by removing the charges for child burials. Councillor Beer would be pleased to find the other precept charges to which he referred in the budget documents and therefore covered by the recommendations. He would be pleased to arrange for him to receive answers to his other questions in writing. Councillor Werner's compliments were gratefully received. Councillor Hill was extremely proud of the Contact Centre; his teams had received various independent national awards for the efficiency and effectiveness.

The budget was for all the residents of the borough, from the many keen to see the regeneration of Maidenhead pick up pace, to those who simply wanted the council's tree outside their gate to be properly pruned, from those eager to see substantial continuing investment in their children's schools, to those who simply wanted their planning application for a new garage handled efficiently. Most of all, the budget was for those which every civilised society put at the top of their priorities, the vulnerable elderly, physically or mentally challenged and children. He was deeply proud to have led the extraordinary efforts of so many officer and Member colleagues to present the budget. It was a Conservative and Unionist budget and it served the needs of the union of all residents across the Borough

It was proposed by Councillor Saunders, seconded by Councillor Bowden, and:

RESOLVED: That Full Council note the report and approve the:

- i) Detailed recommendations contained in Appendix A which includes a Council Tax at band D of £915.57, including a 0.95% increase of £8.62.**
- ii) Adult Social Care Precept of 3% (an increase of £27.75 on the £18.14 precept included in the 2016/17 budget) to be included in the Council's budget proposals, making this levy the equivalent of £45.89 at band D.**

- iii) **Fees and Charges contained in Appendix D are approved, subject to the removal of resident burial fees for infants and children up to the age of 18 years of age.**
- iv) **Capital Programme, shown in appendices F and G, for the financial year commencing April 2017.**
- v) **Prudential borrowing limits set out in Appendix L.**
- vi) **Business rate tax base calculation, detailed in Appendix O, and its use in the calculation of the Council Tax Requirement in Appendix A.**
- vii) **Head of Finance in consultation with the Lead Members for Finance and Children's Services is authorised to amend the total schools budget to reflect actual Dedicated School Grant levels.**
- viii) **Head of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance is authorised to make appropriate changes to the budget to reflect the impact of the transfer of services to Achieving for Children and Optalis.**
- ix) **Responsibility to include the precept from the Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority in the overall Council Tax charges is delegated to the Lead Member for Finance and Head of Finance once the precept is announced.**
- x) **The Head of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance be authorised to amend the budget to reflect the final local government settlement once announced and to notify the council in due course of any subsequent financial changes**

(46 Councillors voted in favour of the motion: Councillors N. Airey, M. Airey, Alexander, Bateson, Beer, Bhatti, Bicknell, Bowden, Brimacombe, Bullock, Burbage, Carroll, Clark, Coppinger, Cox, Diment, Dudley, D. Evans, Dr. L. Evans, Gilmore, Grey, Hill, Hilton, Hollingsworth, Hunt, Ilyas, Jones, Lenton, Love, Luxton, McWilliams, Mills, Quick, Rankin, C. Rayner, S. Rayner, Richards, Saunders, Sharma, Sharp, Sharpe, Smith, Story, D. Wilson, E. Wilson and Yong. One Councillor abstained: Councillor Werner.)

118. LAND AT REAR OF BOULTERS LOCK CAR PARK, MAIDENHEAD

Councillor D. Evans left the meeting.

Members considered the options for a piece of council owned land, to the rear of Boulters Lock car park, Maidenhead.

Councillor Rankin explained that whilst the decision sat within his delegated power, he believed that due to the high level of interest and in the interests of transparency, it was undoubtedly in the public interest that it be debated, discussed and decided at Full Council. He would not be advocating any decision and had produced a paper which laid out only the facts and options that councillors may choose to make.

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For some time, the borough had been in discussion with the Hindu Society of Maidenhead to help them realise their ambition to build a community facility in the town of Maidenhead. From colleagues he understood many sites had been considered over time. By 17 March 2016, officers had negotiated, subject to contract and planning, a 125 year ground lease on a peppercorn rent for the sum of £73,000 for the Hindu Society of Maidenhead to build a community centre on the piece of land in question. This had yet to go to Members for approval.

Councillor Rankin explained that in August he had started to receive correspondence from some residents who objected to the proposal. Despite no decision having been made, it was clear that some residents believed that this was a 'done deal' and had been decided in secret. As such in September 2016 he chose to invite other interested residents groups to come forward with proposals. The Hindu Society transaction was put on hold and they were invited to bid on the same basis. One further proposal was received, by the Boulton Riverside CIC, who offered £101,000, with a plan to turn the site into allotments. The Hindu Society did not vary their proposal. The option to turn the site into a car park extension was also laid out in the report, for Members to consider,

Maidenhead Riverside was a cultural attraction in the borough so Council could determine that the car park should be developed to increase the amenity of the area. Or it could determine that the land should be held in the medium term, and developed later if utilisation rates did increase.

Councillor Rankin proposed that standing order C14.1 be suspended to enable Members to debate all four options without a motion being put forward and seconded. The Monitoring Officer explained to all present that the suspension of standing orders for the duration of the item was to allow all four options in the recommendation to be considered and debated, without the requirement for an individual motion to be proposed and seconded before the debate. A named vote would be taken at the end of the debate, with Members able to indicate they were voting for option i, ii, iii, iv or abstaining, to identify the preferred option from the Council as a whole.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That standing order C14.1 be suspended for the duration of the item to enable Members to debate all four options without a motion being put forwarded and seconded.

Councillor Sharma highlighted that it was a long held desire of the Hindu Community to have a community building. The proposed centre would be a hub and focal point of the local community. He understood the need for increased parking in the area but analysis showed this was not financially viable. The Hindu Society had written to the Property department to state they would be willing to match any bid from a third party. The proposed facility could be used for numerous activities including as a polling station and for elderly local residents to meet. This would help to mitigate some of the anti-social behaviour issues in the car park. The Society had already altered the plans including reducing the size and amending opening times. There would be no extra

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pressure on parking as many users would car-share, use public transport or cycle. Diversity was a gift to the borough rather than a threat, and was a strength of the country. Cultural diversity played an important role in social cohesion, financial prosperity and driving improvements. He asked the council to accept the bid from the Hindu Society.

Councillor Sharma left the meeting at 9.18pm

Councillor Smith explained that there was once a house called Pennywise on the Lower Cookham Road owned by a Mr Maus. The house was long gone, replaced by a residential development, Horsham Reach. In 1966 Mr Maus sold the bottom of his large garden to the council. No-one knew why the council bought this area of about 1,350 sq yds. There had been substantial objection to a community centre, mostly on parking grounds, which was a planning matter. This was the third site considered for a community centre which he was aware of, and he understood there were one or two others.

Finding a site was less than half the battle. What was more important was that it needed to succeed, to be used fully and to grow. He found the Hindu Society's arguments of light and occasional use disingenuous, or if reliable, incompatible with any sensible level of utilisation. However this was not the main issue. The fatal problem with the Riverside site was that it was defined not by its potential but by its limitations in size, space, activities and the hours it may be used. The fact that a second smaller planning application was in the works meant it was already compromised. It could not grow, so its future would be impaired from day one, so it was therefore the wrong use of public resources. Both parties to the proposed lease would be creating a load of intractable problems for themselves for years to come.

In relation to the allotment proposal, he commented that 50 years passed before this idea occurred to anyone. The real purpose was to remove blight: a problem so grave to the neighbours they were apparently prepared to spend upwards of £100,000 to solve it. Allotments would certainly do the trick, as it was virtually impossible then to use the land for anything else: a change of use actually required a statutory instrument. He did not think allotments were the right choice, but the council should note well why residents had felt driven to this desperate measure.

Doing nothing had worked fine for 50 years, but no longer. First, it was a waste of public assets. Second, by letting the genie out of the bottle, the council had alarmed and angered residents by the prospect of blight. The council must accept some blame for this. It may be perfectly normal for councils to negotiate commercial leases in private and ahead of planning, and this is quite unexceptionable when it is dealing with shops or warehouses, and quite normal not to tell ward councillors that negotiations were in hand. In hindsight, and as Councillor Rankin quickly grasped when handed this case, the situation required more sensitivity. If the council resolved to do nothing, he would therefore wish this to be accompanied by some commitment to explore other options, for example, social housing or private sale.

Councillor Smith commented that he had been promised the paper would contain no recommendations, but it did. It recommended not extending the car park. Had he seen the draft paper, he would have asked for these words to be removed. Their presence had encouraged Riverside residents to feel the debate was not open, but a predetermined ambush. In his opinion this was the obvious choice. On the demand

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side: more people in the ward and on Taplow Riverside, a regenerated town centre within walking distance, an aging population more leisure time, more facilities (notably the footbridge, and the second new zebra crossing to go in near Maidenhead Bridge). On the supply side: many new parking restrictions and plenty more to come, including on the access road to Ray Mill Island. Councillors had seen only a perfunctory cost/benefit analysis on expanding the car park. The benefit assumed no change in occupancy rate. This was insufficient: there were accelerants in the demand he had just described. The cost of £239,000 was unexplained and questionable. He would support option iii.

Councillor Diment commented that she had sympathy for the Hindu society and their need for a centre. The council should do everything it could to secure the group a site but she did not believe the Boulters Lock site was suitable because it was very small and there would only be 12 parking spaces. However, parking was a planning issue. Lack of parking in riverside was the biggest concern of residents and was an important consideration in increasing tourism in the area. The new pedestrian bridge would attract more visitors because both sides of the river would be open. The only parking available was Boulters Lock car park. The future of the two hotels in the ward was also in question and their loss would further reduce parking availability. A proper assessment of parking in Riverside was required. She suggested the site be used as a green car park. Allotments were not a viable option a only six would be provided and the land would be lost to the borough in perpetuity. In recent years Ray Mill Road West allotments had been extended. She supported the option of extended parking.

Councillor Love commented that most other faiths had a meeting place in the town. The nearest Hindu centre was in Slough 9 miles away. Therefore the society was forced to hire school facilities to fulfil their social, cultural and religious needs. The council had offered the site as a potential solution and granted a lease in May 2016. The society had spent £30,000 on consultants and architects. A community centre would benefit the whole community and could be used for a wide range of activities. He was particularly interested in the sessions it could offer for the elderly, as loneliness was increasingly seen as a social issue and was a council priority. He urged fellow councillors to accept the Hindu society proposal.

Councillor Hollingsworth stated that doing nothing was not an option. He had an affection for allotments as he had grown up during the war. However there were already numerous allotments in Riverside and his ward. He had visited the site and was aware of the concerns about size and the impact on traffic. The Hindu Society case was valid and social cohesion was important, but it was not appropriate on this site.

Councillor Brimacombe commented there was no argument against the pressing need for the Hindu Society to have a permanent home. However this was not an appropriate piece of land, particularly because Riverside would increasingly be used as a leisure attraction. A long term decision of 125 years was a discrepancy. The allotment proposal was a reaction rather than an initiative. He therefore supported the 'do nothing' option but he was sensitive to the ward councillors' comments that parking may be appropriate.

Councillor Ilyas commented that the council should consider the most effective use of its assets. Leaving the situation as is would not allow utilisation of the space, particularly as land was at a premium. There was no indication in the report that

parking in the area was currently insufficient. Allotments were an excellent idea but only brought pleasure to a small minority. It was in the best interest to provide a facility for the greatest number of people and to promote community values of tolerance and respect.

Councillor Dudley stated that it was a very difficult decision. Discussions about the site started in 2012, but since then there had been a number of significant changes including the residential development across the river, the footbridge and the developing Borough Local Plan. The most important aspect for him was to future proof the parking. However this was a planning matter and would be assessed by the experts; it was not a matter for conjecture. It was also not for the council to consider whether a community facility worked for those who established it. It would not be possible to build a borough for all if car parks and residential developments squeezed out every ounce of community formation. Money did not always talk in these situations. This was an opportunity to create something for the community that was long-cherished. The Hindu society proposal would be right for all residents if it worked in a planning perspective.

Councillor Saunders stated that there could be no doubt the council had a difficult choice because the decision could not satisfy everyone. He had first become involved some years back with the desire to create a community centre, run by the Hindu community and available for multiple and varied use by the public. As the then Cabinet Member for Property and Planning, officers had identified a redundant council site in Pinkneys Green and a planning application was proposed. Amidst local objections, some of which were reviewed for redaction to remove racially offensive attacks, the planning application did not secure consent. The second site identified by officers on Town Moor was not pursued for similar reasons. He was not surprised when the Hindu community lost hope that the borough would be able to handle objections, some of which had racial overtones. When the site in Riverside was proposed to him there seemed a real and deliverable opportunity which he had been pleased to sponsor with the Hindu community. This had been nurtured by others after he had left the Cabinet.

The council still had the opportunity to create a community centre run by the Hindu community and available for multiple and varied use by the public. Indeed, this offered a facility in an important location in need of such a facility at no public cost. The two conditions remained: the proposed building would be subject to a full planning application with full public consultation, and the amount realised for the site needed to be demonstrably appropriate as evidenced previously by an independent valuation and now by a reference price offered by another party. The council had due processes and an obligation to follow them in good faith, otherwise the council's word and trust was at risk of being devalued.

It was fundamental that the planning application would be subject to full consultation and the opportunity for most of the issues referenced to be properly and duly addressed: parking, use conditions, impact on adjacent properties, etc. However none of these were relevant to determining the property decision, which needed to be allowed to complete. When the Pinkneys Green site was being considered, the property decision was duly and properly made within the powers available, falling as it did well below the limit for Cabinet or Council debate in public. This left the public debate where it belonged - in the planning application process. The same should then apply and the Hindu community proposal should proceed.

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Councillor Grey highlighted that the Hindu community was a registered charity and did good work in the community. It had to hire school premises to fulfil the social, cultural and religious needs of the community. It was not a question of money but a question of ethics. The council was duty bound to look at the needs of all residents. He urged Members to support option i.

Councillor Bullock stated he would abstain as he was likely to sit on the Maidenhead Development Management Panel.

Councillor Quick commented that the council had a duty to make the best use of resources. The site lying fallow for 50 years was not the best use. The council had a duty to all parts of the community. The Hindu Society had waited very patiently. Their offer was very generous and the facility could be used by all in the community. With regeneration the possibility of finding the perfect site was disappearing. The proposed site may not be perfect but planning issues would be dealt with in the planning process. She suggested undercroft parking could be an option. She would support option i.

Councillor D. Wilson commented that the borough was multi-cultural and all other faiths had accommodation. To build a borough for all it was right and proper to give due consideration to the property aspect. Details would be discussed in the planning process. He endorsed option i.

Councillor Clark commented that given the history of the Hindu Society's search for a home, it was quite right that appropriate land should be found. It was sad that a valuable piece of land had been unused for so long. A community centre was a great idea but the parking issues were likely to increase and Maidenhead would increase as a visitor attraction given the scale of development. Before the council agreed to a community centre, it should be sure that the piece of land was not required for alternative use, he felt somewhat backed into a corner when the best use of the land needed proper consideration. He preferred the 'do nothing' option.

A named vote was taken with Members able to indicate they were voting for option i, ii, iii, iv or abstaining, and it was:

RESOLVED: That Full Council considers the report and:

i) Accept the Hindu Society proposal

(30 Councillors voted for option i: Councillors M. Airey, N. Airey, Bateson, Beer, Bhatti, Bicknell, Burbage, Carroll, Coppinger, Cox, Dudley, Dr L. Evans, Gilmore, Grey, Hill, Ilyas, Lenton, Love, Luxton, McWilliams, Mills, Quick, S. Rayner, Richards, Saunders, Sharp, Story, Werner, D. Wilson and Yong. 0 Councillors voted for option ii. 7 Councillors voted for option iii: Councillors Alexander, Diment, Hollingsworth, Hunt, C. Rayner, Smith and E. Wilson. 2 Councillors voted for option iv: Councillors Brimacombe and Sharpe. 6 Councillors abstained: Councillors Bowden, Bullock, Clark, Hilton, Jones and Rankin.)

(Councillors D. Evans and Sharma had declared interests and had left the room)

Councillor Sharma and D. Evans re-joined the meeting.

Councillor McWilliams left the meeting at 10.10pm.

119. CONTINUATION OF MEETING

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That, in accordance with rule Part 2 C25.1 of the Royal Borough constitution, the meeting should continue past 10.00pm.

Councillors Hunt and Bowden left the meeting at 10.15pm

120. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Members considered a number of amendments to the council constitution.

Councillor Coppinger introduced the report on behalf of Councillors Targowska. He advise Members that the amendment detailed in paragraph 2.6 had been withdrawn.

He outlined the proposals:

- Any Member, not already a Member of a Development Management Panel, wishing to speak at a Panel will be permitted to speak in favour or against any agenda item after all public speakers have spoken and prior to the Panel debating the item. Non Panel Members will be restricted to three minutes in total
- The current Visitor Management Forum has requested that their title be changed to Tourism Development Forum
- The Employment Panel have requested that the current approval threshold (in excess of £5,000) be increased to a revised threshold of £25,000. This will enable timely decisions on approval of payments
- Where the recruitment of Directors and Deputy Chief Officers of Services and appointments are on a like for like basis, the appointment will be delegated to the Managing Director and Head of HR in consultation with the relevant Service Director, the relevant Lead Member and the Chair of the Employment Panel.
- The Windsor Rural Development Management Panel Membership be increased from six Members to nine Members to bring it in line with the membership number of the Windsor Urban Development Management Panel.
- Updated terms of reference to give more clarity to the work and role of the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Updated Terms of Reference for the Grants Panel following the end of the Cabinet Participatory Budget Sub Committee including specific delegations to the Head of Strategy and Communities in consultation with Members.
- Updated terms of reference for the Berkshire Pension Fund Panel to clarify emergency powers
- A correction to a delegation relating to functions relating to local government pensions

Councillor Werner left the meeting at 10.17pm.

Councillor Burbage highlighted that, despite the withdrawal, there was a mandatory requirement for the annual budget to be recorded as a named vote.

Councillor Saunders suggested additional wording to paragraph 1.7 on page 189 of the report to read:

'No new documents should be circulated to the panel at the meeting, *except the Panel Update*. Messages should not be passed to individual Panel Members.'

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Full Council considers and approves:

- i) **The amendments to the Constitution set out in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.15 and Appendix 1, subject to the removal of the proposal at 2.6.**
- ii) **Additional wording to be added to paragraph 1.7 on page 189 of the report to read:**

'No new documents should be circulated to the panel at the meeting, *except the Panel Update*. Messages should not be passed to individual Panel Members.'

Councillor Werner re-joined the meeting at 10.25pm

121. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2017/18

Members considered the programme of meetings for 2017/18.

It was proposed by Councillor Dudley, seconded by Councillor Dr L Evans, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council notes the report and:

- i) **Approves the programme of meetings for the 2017/18 Municipal Year, attached as Appendix A.**

122. APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY OFFICERS

Alison Alexander left the meeting.

Members considered the statutory appointments of Monitoring Officer, Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer following the agreement by Employment Panel of a new management structure for the Corporate and Community Services Directorate.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council notes the report and appoints:

- i) **Head of Law and Governance, Mary Kilner, as the Council's Monitoring Officer.**
- ii) **Managing Director, Alison Alexander, as the Council's Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.**

123. APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2017/18

Members considered approval of an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 as required by the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Coppinger introduced the report on behalf of Councillor Targowska. He explained that the Localism Act 2011 required the council to review and publish a pay policy by 31 March each year. Councillor Coppinger highlighted the changes as detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

Alison Alexander re-joined the meeting.

It was noted that a number of staff would be transferring out of the council in the coming months, therefore an updated statement would be presented to Council later in the year to reflect the changes.

It was proposed by Councillor Coppinger, seconded by Councillor Dr L. Evans, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council notes the report and:

- i) Approves the updated Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18.**
- ii) Notes that further revisions will be required to the statement following the external transfer of some council services on 1 April 2017 and for the implementation of the Government's reforms to public sector exit pay arrangements.**

124. TRANSFORMING CARE PARTNERSHIP CAPITAL PROJECT

Members considered a capital grant of £997,841 from NHS England that would allow the council to purchase a house for three residents with complex learning difficulties to gain a degree of independent living. The grant was time limited and the property needed to be purchased and adapted by the end of March. A ten year management lease would be arranged with a specialist housing association. All costs would be covered by rental income. A care provider would be selected separately.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council notes the report and agrees:

- i) To enter into an NHS England Capital Grant Agreement.**
- ii) To enter into a house purchase contract.**
- iii) To delegate authority to the Managing Director/Strategic Director Adult, Children and Health Services and Lead Member of Adult, Health and Sustainability to negotiate and enter into a lease agreement and property development contract with a Housing Association following competitive selection.**

125. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

The item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

126. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

- a) Question submitted by Councillor C Rayner to Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:**

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Can the Leader of the Council inform us what steps he is taking to try to reinstate the Saturday guard change in Windsor?

Councillor Dudley responded that last year, the Headquarters Household Division reviewed the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Guard frequency and agreed that from Monday 16 January 2017 the Windsor Guard will be on the same the day as Queen's Guard. The Guard Change days being Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, although the Guards did not march to Windsor Castle on Sundays.

The Headquarters Household Division had stressed that the changes were very much a trial and were currently being reviewed, with a decision expected by the end of March. Councillor Dudley had written to the Brigade Major, who was carrying out that review, to convey to him the concerns that had been expressed locally about the loss of the Saturday guard change in Windsor. He had informed the Brigade Major that what was considered suitable for London, in terms of guard change days, was not necessarily suitable for Windsor and had therefore suggested to him that the Saturday Guard Change in Windsor be reinstated.

The initial response from the Brigade Major to the arguments made to him had been positive and he was hopeful for a satisfactory review outcome and the reinstatement of the Saturday Guard Change in Windsor

Councillor C. Rayner confirmed he did not have a supplementary question.

b) Question submitted by Councillor C Rayner to Councillor Bicknell, Lead Member for Highways and Transport:

Will the Lead Member for Highways and Transport provide an update on the 305 bus service, with particular reference to Horton and Wraysbury, following changes to the funding of the route?

Councillor Bicknell responded that Service 305 was operated by 'Bear Bus' connecting Wraysbury, Horton and Hythe End with Poyle, Colnbrook and Staines. The service was financially supported by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Surrey County Council, the borough contributes approximately £30,000. In September 2016, Surrey County Council withdrew funding for the service. The Royal Borough agreed to fund the shortfall in the short-term to ensure that the service was maintained, whilst options were explored.

Councillor Bicknell explained that with officers and the Deputy Lead Member for Buses, he had considered options. Bids had now been invited to continue to provide the service in a cost-effective manner. Following receipt of bids, he would work with Ward Members and officers to agree the way forward, seeking to maintain bus services for local residents. No decision had been made and the way forward will be made in consultation with Ward Members.

By way of a supplementary, Councillor C. Rayner commented that it was a shame that ward councillors had not been told in August 2016 when Surrey County council withdrew their funding.

c) Question submitted by Councillor Beer to Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

Government has accepted there is a housing crisis, but Government, MPs and the expand Heathrow lobby ignore that expansion would exacerbate the crisis. Will your Administration please resource an urgent active campaign alerting other Councils and the public using Local Plan data on housing and the entire infrastructure as the overriding reasons to reject expansion in the current NPS consultation?

Councillor Dudley responded that the council had been actively engaged in a campaign against the potential expansion of runway capacity at Heathrow Airport. The council had worked in partnership with other like minded authorities and organisations, namely the London Boroughs of Hillingdon, Wandsworth, Richmond and Greenpeace.

The National Policy Statement public consultation was launched by the Secretary of State for Transport on 2 February 2017. Prior to this, the council, along with its partners, had set out its intention to challenge the legalities of such a process by way of judicial review. In response, Government initiated legal proceedings in the High Court to strike out the council's case. Mr Justice Cranston delivered his verdict at the end of January setting out that any challenge could not be heard by the High Court until after the NPS consultation and parliamentary scrutiny process had run their course. This was expected to complete at the end of 2017.

The advice given to the council by its legal team was for residents, alongside officers, to engage in the process, raising awareness of the impacts that such a scheme would have. The consultation document itself set out a number of specific impacts that the NPS needed to address, including amongst others: noise, air quality, surface access, land use and green belt pressures. The borough's communication plan included measures to ensure residents knew the impacts of expansion at Heathrow and how they could have their say on this very important matter.

An officer working group was currently reviewing the consultation and technical documents relating to the NPS. Members and officers would ensure a robust response was submitted to the Secretary of State. This would highlight the impacts the council believed expansion would have including such infrastructure demands that would place a burden on the local area and future requirements for housing and employment land. The council would continue to do all that that it could to protect its residents and the borough from the effects of expansion at Heathrow.

By way of a supplementary, Councillor Beer highlighted that the Back Heathrow campaign had put out a lot of information that was inaccurate and exaggerated. DfT displays at a recent meeting in Egham presented false and inaccurate presentations. The council needed to publicise this in the council newspaper and state the true facts so misunderstanding and opposition to the council continuing its legal action was corrected. High profile publication in combination with other authorities was required.

Councillor Dudley responded that the next edition of Around the Royal Borough would include a leaflet on the NPS outlining the facts and enabling residents to respond to the consultation via a tear-off slip. The cost of the leaflet was £10,000. Lawyers were analysing the consultation to identify any weaknesses.

127. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Councillor Quick introduced her motion. She explained the historic association of the Household Cavalry to Windsor, dating back to 1616. The Household Cavalry was one of the two most senior regiments and formed the monarch's personal bodyguard. Since 1804 the Household Cavalry had been permanently stationed at Combermere barracks. Because of the long association with the town, many generations of families had ties, including soldiers who had settled in the area after they left the army. The Mayor had chosen the Household Cavalry Foundation as her charity this year, which supported soldiers, veterans, horses and the heritage.

Councillor E. Wilson commented that it had been a shock to many residents on Broome Farm because the Household Cavalry had been stationed at the barracks for nearly 200 years; it was part of the community. There was a useful and informative museum on site and he asked the Lead Member to make contact to see if this facility could be retained. The departure would mean a large number of children leaving Alexander First School in one go, which could be very destabilising to a small school. He asked the Lead Member to contact the school and offer support.

It was proposed by Councillor Quick, seconded by Councillor E. Wilson, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council:

- (i) Notes that Windsor is a Royal town with a long military history;**
- (ii) Notes with concern the plans to relocate the Household Cavalry Regiment from Combermere Barracks, its permanent home since 1804, and;**
- (iii) Requests that the Leader writes to the Secretary of State for Defence to call for the retention of the historic link between the Household Cavalry and Windsor**

The meeting, which began at 7.30pm, ended at 10.45pm.

Chairman

Date.....