

AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Windsor on Tuesday, 25th July, 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Lenton (Chairman) Quick, (Vice Chairman) Alexander, Bateson, Beer, Bhatti, Bicknell, Bowden, Burbage, Carroll, Clark, Coppinger, Cox, Diment, Dudley, D Evans, Gilmore, Grey, Hilton, Hunt, Ilyas, Jones, Kellaway, Love, Luxton, Mills, Muir, Pryer, Rankin, C. Rayner, S Rayner, Richards, Saunders, Sharma, Sharp, Sharpe, Shelim, Story, Stretton, Targowska, Walters, D. Wilson, E. Wilson and Yong.

Officers: Rachel Kinniburgh, Andy Jeffs, Mary Kilner, Rob Stubbs, Russell O'Keefe, Alison Alexander, Anna Robinson and Karen Shepherd

162. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors N. Airey, M. Airey, Brimacombe, Da Costa, Dr L Evans, Hill, Hollingsworth, Lion, Majeed, Smith and Werner.

163. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That:

- i) **The Part I minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2017 be approved, subject to the amendments to the following paragraphs, as requested by Councillor Majeed:**

'Councillor Majeed stated that he was very concerned that councillors had only been given five minutes to speak on one of the most discussed documents that had hit the RBWM. He said that he was representing the issues and concerns of the residents of Oldfield and also the constituents of the Royal Borough who had been let down by their councillors.

The BLP in its current form needed to be stopped because it would be thrown out by the Inspector *and the council had the opportunity now to address the concerns and options before the plan was submitted.* Residents were not against building or affordable housing; they just wanted a BLP that would complement the borough and keep the character of its towns and villages. *All were for a BLP resulting from a consultation with residents and neighbouring boroughs, had all options considered, was not a shot-gun BLP and had conferred with other boroughs further afield such as Hastings, Brighton, and Birmingham etc.* The Regulation 18 consultation had come out over Christmas when people were focused on their families. The response was just 1% of residents; *a large number of responses were from developers in support of a 'Developer's Charter'.*

He asked why Councillors who wished to vote against the BLP and could not make the meeting not be given a proxy vote due to again a busy holiday period? He stated that residents were concerned that consultations and meetings were being carried out over periods when there would be the least amount of input.

There were sections in Appendix F that referenced consultations that had not been carried out, for example highways modelling, so councillors were voting on something that they were not altogether clear about.

He understood that the plan had been changed earlier in the year, yet in its current state the people had not been able to hold it to account. He asked how it was possible to go from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19 with completely different documents? The plan in its current state would fail. He asked why had the council not reduced the housing targets set by the Objectively Assessed Need and whether all options, including satellite villages had been considered? When one of the respected societies in Maidenhead had suggested that new settlements may be an answer, they were told these were not being considered. He asked had all options been considered? No, was the answer at the end of the previous week from one of the senior planning officers.

He felt that no plan was better than a bad plan. The voices of residents had not been heard. The request to ask questions at the meeting had been denied and an e-petition with over 1600 signatures had been rejected. Members had now politicised officers and forced them to adopt a one-sided approach. The RBWM tweets had shown this; words like North Korean propaganda had been used. He said that he would not say who was being referred to as Kim Yong. He asked Members to vote against Regulation 19 and talk and listen to residents through a Regulation 18.'

ii) The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017 be approved.

164. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Burbage, Lenton, Quick and Story declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in the item 'Members Allowance Scheme' as they held roles that were proposed to receive a new Special Responsibility Allowance. They would take no part in the discussion or vote on the item.

Councillor Saunders stated that as a Cabinet Member, he would not receive the additional allowance as an Optalis Director proposed in the item 'Members Allowance Scheme' and, in the event that he became entitled to the allowance in the future, he irrevocably committed that he would not seek or accept it. Consequently, he had no prejudicial or pecuniary interest on the item.

Councillors Lenton, Kellaway and Hilton declared personal interests in the item 'Pension Fund Valuation 2016' as Members of the Berkshire Pension Fund Panel. Councillor Lenton, as Chairman of the Panel, stated he would speak on the item but abstain from the vote. Councillor Hilton stated that he would speak on the item but abstain from the vote. Councillor Kellaway stated that he would not speak or vote on the item.

Councillors Dudley, Story, Sharpe and Alexander declared personal interests in the item 'Pension Fund Valuation 2016' as substitute Members of the Berkshire Pension Fund Panel. Councillor Dudley stated that he was also a member of the investment Working Group and would take not part in the debate or vote on the matter. Councillor Alexander stated that he would take no part in the debate or vote.

165. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

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

166. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

a) The Mayor asked the following question to the Lead Member for Planning on behalf of Tom Denniford of Bisham & Cookham Ward who was unable to attend the meeting:

The Council has recently been successful in taking enforcement action in respect of a chicken farm off Lighlands Lane, Cookham. Yet, as the councillor knows, for more than three years residents in the vicinity of a similar operation in Winter Hill Road have had to endure rats, odours and flies and general damage to their amenities.

What, in planning terms, is the difference between these two sites?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that whilst it was accepted that the two units were similar in size and agricultural operations, he emphasised the long held principle in planning terms that each case was based on its own merits. Notwithstanding this, there were some distinguishable differences in how the local authority reached conclusions in assessing the respective developments, namely the buildings being erected on land at Strande Lane being within a functional flood plain and the Council finding it expedient to take enforcement action. It was important to note that the Council had found the large structure on land at Strande Lane and metal container to be development that required planning permission as defined under Section 55 of the Act.

Conversely, the polytunnels on land at Winter Hill were not to be considered development that was permitted development or development that required planning permission, as it did not appear to meet the three-stage test as set out in *Cardiff Rating Authority and Cardiff Assessment Committee v Guest Keen and Baldwin's Iron and Steel Co.Ltd [1949]*, and refined in *Skerrits of Nottingham v Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions [2000]*, namely size, permanence and physical attachment to the ground. This conclusion was reviewed by the then Development Control Manager in January 2015 following a meeting with residents, Ward Members and the Parish Council in the summer of 2014 at which he had also been present. Although it should be noted that each unit also had other forms of development, namely feed silos and some hard surface, these were considered to be permitted development under Part 6 of the General Planning Development Order.

The Mayor, on behalf of Mr Denniford asked the following supplementary questions:

More than three years ago you attended a meeting to discuss the Winter Hill road site. At the time the then Head of Planning said it was not currently expedient to take any action. But the borough has recently been successful in a virtually identical situation at Lighlands Lane. It is important that the borough is seen to be acting in a fair and even-handed manner. When, therefore, will the planning department stop prevaricating and take action at Winter Hill Road?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that, to try and give some indication of how officers considered the matter of expediency, the current Government Guidance on taking enforcement action was contained in the National Planning Policy Framework which made it clear that councils, as Local Planning Authorities, should not condone the wilful breach of planning law, but must apply discretion in applying their enforcement powers, taking formal action only where they consider proportionate. This of course only applied where a breach of planning control had occurred.

Land between Lightlands Lane and Strande View Walk, Strande Lane, Cookham, was an agricultural unit less than 5 Hectares in size. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order 2015 (Part 6, B) provided the relevant legislation in the planning context to control development. The site was located within the Green Belt and lay within a functional flood plain which meant there was a high probability of flooding.

Land adjacent to Honey House, Winter Hill Road, Maidenhead was an agricultural unit also less than 5 Hectares in size and was subject to the same planning control in terms of the planning legislation. The site was similarly located within the Green Belt but not within an area liable to flood.

b) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill ward asked the Principal Member for Public Health and Communications the following question:

By way of background, Mr Hill explained there was a tiny advert in the Maidenhead Advertiser on 8 June 2017 that referred to a plot of land in Braywick Park. Members of the public were required to go to the Town Hall, where you would get two pieces of paper, neither of which stated why the open space was being disposed off. When he had contacted the lawyers they were unsure as to why it was being sold off and as a consequence it was agreed to extend the deadline by 14 days.

In the alleged public consultation on partly disposing of Braywick Park, RBWM insisted on physical attendance at the town hall to see the documents, and refused to place those documents onto the consultation website. Whilst lawyers claimed no mandatory requirement to do so, e.g. under 20(6) Equality Act 2010, why would RBWM make it so difficult for residents to engage?

Councillor Carroll responded that there had been no intention to make it difficult for residents. As part of the preparatory work for the plans to re-provide the Magnet Leisure Centre and to provide a long term permanent location for the Forest Bridge School at the Braywick Park site, the council followed the statutory process was required, to inform residents that the council was considering removing a piece of land from public open space to allow for the shared use by the school and public. This process allowed residents to make comments on the proposals and to see which parcel of land was involved.

As a statutory process the council was obliged to advertise in the local newspaper for two consecutive weeks, which had been done. This process followed the guidance that the council's solicitors provided and was in line with the practice the council and others had followed for a number of years. The process also required that a copy of the site plan showing the parcel of land be made available from the Town Hall.

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A good number of comments were received from residents via the statutory public notice process, and all the comments were reviewed by the relevant officers and the council did write back to all those who commented with its response and conclusions.

However, the council appreciated that it could go further to make it easier for even wider community engagement and in future it had already been agreed that details of the statutory process would be included on the website and the documents would be made available electronically, as well as placing these adverts in the local paper as required by the statutory arrangements.

The council was happy to provide the plan showing the space involved on this occasion electronically, but was not aware that it was specifically asked for. The time available for comments to be received was extended in response to a request.

By way of a supplementary, Mr Hill commented that the apparent determination to deter residents from responding to consultations had made itself manifest even more strongly in the approach to Regulation 19 of the Borough Local Plan consultation. He asked if Councillors were aware a leading QC had provided written opinion that this approach was unlawful and the consultation should be abandoned and recommenced.

Councillor Dudley responded that the barrister's opinion that the council had received, which was actually from someone who was connected with the Campaign for Rural England, was being reviewed by the borough's barrister and a written opinion would be received at the beginning of the following week. The council would issue this on the website and would also respond to a piece of correspondence from the Secretary of State (Department of Communities and Local Government, which would go alongside the opinion in the interests of transparency.

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

On June 29th Councillor Dudley announced on twitter that the Monitoring Officer had determined "no breach" of the Code of Conduct by Councillor Saunders. However I could find no official determination published on RBWM's CoC webpage - so I don't know what he was cleared of. Who told you there had been a determination of "no breach" and when?

Councillor Dudley responded that the Monitoring Officer made an initial assessment, consulted with the Independent Person and decided not to proceed with the complaint. He understood that this was an end to the matter. There was no need for any official determination to be published on RBWM's webpage. The Monitoring Officer informed the Managing Director that she would not be proceeding with the complaint on 29 June 2017 and he had received an email confirming this and had commented on Twitter as it was a matter of public interest. The complaint was dealt with under the initial assessment process under the council's Code of Conduct and did not proceed to a formal determination of whether there was a breach or not.

By way of a supplementary, Mr Hill asked a question relating to an earlier code of conduct complaint.

Councillor Dudley responded that, given the question related to a different complaint than the one referred to in the original question, if Mr Hill wished to write to him with the details, he would respond.

As per Part 2C paragraph 9.3 of the Constitution, the Mayor had agreed to accept the following urgent question:

d) Paul Serjeant of Oldfield ward asked the Lead Member for Planning the following question:

Residents were sent an email on July 14th informing us of a new "call for sites". No announcement of any such impending consultation was made at the Borough Local Plan (BLP) Extraordinary meeting on June 19th (or elsewhere). Given that the BLP has already been approved for submission can RBWM explain why this sudden "call for sites" is required?

Councillor D. Wilson responded the Council was undertaking a 'Call for Sites' that encouraged developers, landowners, and other interested parties to promote sites for development. Sites could be promoted at any time, but a regular 'Call for Sites' ensured the latest information was submitted, in order to update council databases. The last 'Call for Sites' was undertaken in 2015.

The information submitted helped to inform the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) which was a technical study of all potential housing, economic and retail sites within the borough. The HELAA attempted to establish realistic assumptions about the number of homes, employment and retail floorspace that the land could yield and the timeframe within which it was likely to come forward. The identification of a site in the HELAA did not necessarily mean that the site would be allocated for development, or that planning permission would be granted. The information submitted may result in changes to the deliverability classification of sites assessed in the HELAA (2016), and which would inform the latest version of the HELAA.

The Borough Local Plan had been published under Regulation 19 of the (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The information submitted during the 'Call for Sites' would be considered in relation to the sites proposed in the Borough Local Plan, and, subject to the wishes of the Planning Inspector, may be discussed at the Examination of the Borough Local Plan.

The updated HELAA would also inform the Council's monitoring functions and the production of an Authorities Monitoring Report which would need to accompany the Borough Plan when it was submitted to the Secretary of State.

By way of a supplementary, Mr Serjeant commented that an independent Green Belt review for the whole borough was provided by Bell Cornwell as part of their Regulation 18 response. Had any changes been made to the content of the Plan as a consequence of that Green Belt review?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that there were a number of responses to the Regulation 18 process, some of which had been incorporated within the Regulation 19 process which would continue to 25 August for responses. Technically Regulation 19 was on the legal and technical soundness of the plan but in addition members of

the public could make representations and they would be forwarded to the Secretary of State at the appropriate time. In relation to Regulation 18, the council had already responded, with the responses made available on the council website.

167. PETITIONS

None received

168. COUNCIL PLAN 2017-2021 & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK 2017/18

Members considered a new draft Council Plan, the development of two new supporting corporate plans, People and Customers, together with a new corporate performance management framework to align to the new Plan.

Councillor Dudley explained that since the Corporate Strategy 2016-2020 was approved in December 2015, the Council had significantly transformed its operating model. It was therefore appropriate to refresh the Council's strategic plan in the light of the new model. The Corporate Strategy was the definitive statement of the council's intentions and therefore provided the framework for all its activities. A proposed draft Plan has been developed which set out six priorities for the period 2017-2021 and related objectives. The priorities and objectives had been informed by reference to existing manifesto commitments, the existing corporate strategy and other wider strategies, such as the emerging Borough Local Plan, the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Medium Term Financial Plan. The Royal Borough's strategic aims of *Residents First, Value for Money, Delivering Together and Equipping Ourselves for the Future* remained the golden thread, with the new aligned priorities giving greater focus.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council:

- i) Approves the draft Council Plan, see Appendix A.**
- ii) Delegates authority to the Managing Director, the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Lead Member for Policy and Affordable Housing to make any final amendments.**
- iii) Notes the development of a Customer Plan by the Head of Library and Resident Services and the Lead Member for Culture and Communities incl. Customer and Business Services for approval at a future Cabinet meeting.**
- iv) Notes the development of a People Plan by the Head of HR and the Principal Member for HR, Legal and ICT for approval at a future Employment Panel.**
- v) Notes the preparation of a new corporate performance management framework, aligned to the new Plan, to be approved by Cabinet in August 2017 and reported on in September 2017.**

It was confirmed that all councillors had received an electronic copy of the strategy, in colour, as it was included in the agenda paperwork. Councillor Dudley asked for the

strategy to be given a prominent place on the website and sent out to residents using the usual distribution networks.

169. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Members considered proposed changes to the Constitution. Councillor Targowska explained that the proposed changes would ensure the council could operate efficiently and transparently. Members noted the proposed changes detailed in paragraphs 2.5-2.7 of the report, including minor changes to the memberships of the Access Advisory Forum and Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and the addition of terms of reference for the new Achieving for Children joint committee.

In addition, the report proposed that the Constitution Sub Committee be asked to consider whether social media guidance should be included in the Councillor's Code of Conduct. The council's staff social media policy had been amended to include councillors, but feedback had been received that a councillor specific guide would be more useful.

Councillor Jones commented that the Opposition Group felt the proposed changes were eminently sensible.

Councillor Hunt asked why the Roman Catholic Church had only one representative on SACRE, when the church of England had three. Councillor Kellaway, a member of SACRE and himself a Roman Catholic, commented that the Church of England was the established church in the country and was also the most predominant. The Chairman of SACRE was of Baha'i faith.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Full Council:

- i) Consider and approve the amendments to the Constitution set out paragraphs 2.5 to 2.7, see Appendix 1 for full details.**
- ii) Requests the Constitution Sub Committee:**
 - a. Consider options to include guidance on the use of social media within the Councillors' Code of Conduct, and to report back to Full Council with recommendations to amend the Code of Conduct within the constitution.**
 - b. Review the current social media policy and develop a dedicated policy for Councillors.**

170. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

As both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had declared an interest in this item, a Chairman was appointed for the duration of the item.

It was recommended by Councillor Bowden, seconded by Councillor E. Wilson and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Councillor Luxton be appointed as Chairman for the duration of the item.

Members considered recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel to make amendments to the Members' Allowance Scheme. Members noted the proposed amendments as detailed in the report.

Councillor Dudley highlighted that the Independent Remuneration Panel had recommended an SRA of £7185 for the Chairman of the Borough-wide Development Control Panel. This figure would be received by an individual if they were already the Chairman of a Development Management Panel, but they would no longer receive the SRA for the DM chairman role, to maintain the 1 SRA rule. The report recommended that, if the individual was not already a Development Management Panel Chairman, they would only receive the differential of £1198.

Councillor Kellaway highlighted that allowances were subject to taxation and National Insurance.

Members noted that the allowance of £3000 for Non-Executive Directors (NED) of Optalis was funded by Optalis rather than the Borough. Each NED would be allocated an allowance of £3000. Councillor E. Wilson asked what the £3000 was paying for, to be an NED of Optalis or to act as liaison between the council and Optalis. The payment was referred to as an allowance therefore it implied that the role was on behalf of Optalis. Councillor Dudley explained the allowance was to allow the NEDs to discharge their role and provide the necessary NED oversight, challenge and scrutiny. The council's partner in Optalis, Wokingham Borough Council already paid their NED representatives £3000 therefore they had asked the borough to do the same. Councillor Dudley explained he would prefer to have avoided the payment of such allowances however the council was simply mirroring arrangements already in place at Wokingham.

Councillor Bicknell commented that he was pleased to see the Mayoralty being recognised; this would make it easier for young people or the less well-off to undertake the role. Councillor Luxton commented that she was particularly pleased to see the allowance for the Deputy Mayor who had to drive themselves to events and find parking etc. It was noted that the proposal to backdate the allowance was to align the payment with the municipal year. Councillor Dudley thanked Councillor Luxton, who had been involved in promoting an SRA for the mayoralty for some time.

It was proposed by councillor Dudley, seconded by Councillor Coppinger and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Full Council notes the report and considers proposals detailed in Appendix A by the Independent Remuneration Panel:

- i) A Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Chairman of the borough-wide Development Management Panel, payable at a level of the Leader's allowance multiplied by 30% (£7185). The principle of one SRA per Member to be maintained as follows: If the postholder is already a Development Management Panel Chairman, they would receive the higher SRA of £7185 only. If the post holder is not already a Development Management Panel Chairman, they would receive an SRA equivalent to the incremental difference (£1,198) between the Development Management Panel Chairman SRA (£5,987) and the Borough-wide Development Management Panel Chairman SRA (£7185).**

- ii) A Special Responsibility Allowance of £3,000 be paid to the Mayor and a Special Responsibility Allowance of £1,000 be paid to the Deputy Mayor. The principle of one SRA per Member be maintained.**
- iii) Amendments to the scheme relating to Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairman of the Borough-wide Development Management Panel, the Mayor, and the Deputy Mayor, be backdated to 23 May 2017, the start of the 2017/18 municipal year.**
- iv) A Special Responsibility Allowance of £3,000 per annum be paid to the three councillors appointed as Non-Executive Directors to the Optalis Board and be backdated to 1 April 2017, the date of the formation of the new joint service. The principle of one SRA per Member be maintained.**
- v) £5,198 be added to the Members Special Responsibility Allowance budget to cover the full year costs.**
- vi) Delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Members' Allowance Scheme in the Constitution as appropriate.**

(Councillors Burbage, Lenton, Quick and Story took no part in the debate or vote).

171. YORK HOUSE REFURBISHMENT

Members considered final approval for the capital budget of £9,618,995 to cover the contractor costs for the refurbishment and extension works to York House, Windsor.

Councillor Rankin explained that the proposals would provide a multi-functional hub for residents and improved accommodation for valued staff. The report was in line with the report to the Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee in December 2016 and the council's approved budget apart from one aspect. In light of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, officers had reviewed the cladding proposed to be used. This had resulted in an additional £400,000 to ensure safety.

Councillor Dudley commented that the proposals would create a fantastic office accommodation for Optalis, Achieving for Children and residents using front of house services in Windsor. The report explained that the current value of the property was £4m and the investment was £9.6m. The anticipated value of the final building would be £17.5m. The council may not need all the office space and there was a shortage in Windsor so there was a rental opportunity.

Councillor E. Wilson stated that this was a fantastic investment in Windsor with the potential to inspire the future if it was a dynamic and interesting building not the usual council monolith. He asked if the Lead Member had given further thought to trees and foliage as a mature tree was being removed. Lots of small business in Windsor were struggling to find office space therefore he liked the possibility for small business being able to sub-let York House; this would help to make the area more dynamic during the day. The council had been campaigning for a long time to get Thames Valley Police (TVP) to open a counter in Windsor since the closure at Alma Road, but it had refused to share York House.

Councillor Bicknell commented that the proposals had been a long time coming, but would get everyone together. He understood that technical reasons had led to a mutual agreement for TVP not to share York House.

Councillor Rankin explained that a relatively mature Yew tree was to be removed following determination by the tree officer that it was not well. There would be increased foliage at the front of the building. He would work with residents of Brook Street to identify a new tree, although this would not be of the same maturity. It was not the council's immediate intention to rent offices in the building. It was anticipated that more staff would use the building once refurbished and it would also be attractive to AfC staff given the location of the other sites at Richmond and Kingston on the same train line. It would then be a question of estate management and a commercial decision whether to rent out any space. The council had engaged with the police on a 'one stop shop' idea but planning reasons had led to the mutual decision to discontinue negotiations. TVP had published a press release committing to finding a base in Windsor. It was up to the council to hold them to account on this.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council notes the report and:

- i) Approves capital budget of £9,618,995 for the York House project, split between £6,400,000 in 2017/18 and £3,218,995 in 2018/19.**
- ii) This budget allocation reflects the project timeline, with completion scheduled for 30th November 2018.**

172. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

a) Question submitted by Councillor Jones to Councillor D. Wilson, Lead Member for Planning:

What assurances can be given in regards of the ability of our borough wide infrastructure (not 'on-site' infrastructure) to cope with development specified in the Borough Local Plan for the future?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that the Submission Version of the Borough Local Plan was supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which set out what the requirements were for additional infrastructure capacity to deliver the development allocated through the local plan. The IDP was on the website as part of the ongoing Regulation 19 stage of the BLP.

By way of a supplementary, Councillor Jones asked, given the council's cash flow forecast was borrowing of £150m and the financial commitments were mounting, including new leisure centres and an increase in the pension deficit, what details were available to show the council could afford the investment in the highways network if Crossrail and runway 3 saw fruition?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that infrastructure would be secured either through the Community Infrastructure Levy or through section 106 agreements relating to each individual site. The infrastructure requirements of individual schemes could only be assessed at the planning application stage. A number of applications would include a Masterplan; as part of the process each development would have to provide adequate infrastructure, as assessed by officers.

b) Question submitted by Councillor Jones to Councillor Carroll, Principal Member for Public Health and Communications:

Apart from expediency, can you explain the reasons behind the decision to amend an employee media policy rather than publish a policy that was Member specific and able to address the differing communication needs?

Councillor Carroll responded that changes had been made to ensure the policy covered Members as previously there had been no policy including Members and it was an important issue given the wide use social media. Many local authorities had policies that covered both groups. The council had tried to be efficient and have one policy. The current officer policy was appropriate guidance but as discussed earlier, this would be looked at again to see if additional guidance was necessary.

Councillor Jones confirmed she did not have a supplementary question.

c) Question submitted by Councillor Stretton to Councillor Carroll, Principal Member for Public Health and Communications:

Given that our website describes Consultation as key to “ensuring decisions are taken in an open, honest and accountable way”, can you explain why the wording of the Braywick Park Land Disposal Consultation was so ambiguous and so poorly advertised, not even appearing on the Consultation page of our website or circulated to the Users of Braywick Park?

Councillor Carroll responded that a technical point was that this was a statutory process rather than a consultation but it was the aim to widen promotion in future. RBWM had followed the statutory process to publish a Notice of Intended Disposal of open space land, in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act, as part of the preparatory work for the plans to re-provide the Magnet Leisure Centre and to provide a long term permanent location for the Forest Bridge School at the Braywick Park site.

The Council followed the statutory process to inform residents that it was considering removing a piece of land from public open space, in order to allow for the shared use by the school and public as hard courts. The statutory process obliged RBWM to advertise in the local newspaper for two consecutive weeks, which was done. The process also required that a copy of the site plan showing the parcel of land be available from the Town Hall.

There was no intention whatsoever to make this process difficult. The council had not been aware of a specific request to make the plan available electronically. He had already confirmed the council could have made the reason for the Notice more explicit, and included a more detailed explanation on the proposed use. In future the Notice would be more explicit and include the Notice on the Website as well as in the local paper. The council had learned from the feedback received, and would reflect this in any future Notices.

By way of a supplementary, Councillor Stretton asked why all consultations were not placed on the consultation page on the website as a matter of course and why the council only met the statutory minimum requirements.

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Councillor Carroll responded that a number of consultations did appear on the website and the council used social media to promote them. He would meet with the communications team to ensure this happened for all consultations going forward as appropriate.

173. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

None received

174. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on items 14-15 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.