

**AT AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Desborough Suite - Town Hall on Monday, 30th October, 2017**

PRESENT: Councillor Lenton (The Mayor), Councillor Quick (Deputy Mayor), Councillors M. Airey, N. Airey, Alexander, Bateson, Beer, Bhatti, Bicknell, Bowden, Bullock, Carroll, Clark, Coppinger, Cox, Da Costa, Dudley, D. Evans, L. Evans, Grey, Hill, Hilton, Hunt, Ilyas, Kellaway, Lenton, Lion, Love, Luxton, Majeed, McWilliams, Mills, Muir, Pryer, Quick, Rankin, C. Rayner, S. Rayner, Richards, Sharma, Sharpe, Shelim, Smith, Story, Stretton, Targowska, Walters, Werner, D. Wilson, E. Wilson and Yong.

Officers: Alison Alexander, Russell, O'Keefe, Andy Jeffs, Rob Stubbs. Mary Kilner, Karen Shepherd, Chris Anderson and Barbara Richardson.

198. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Burbage, Gilmore, Hollingsworth, Jones, Saunders and Sharp.

199. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Diment declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the item 'Maidenhead Golf Club' as she was a member of the club. She took no part in the debate or vote on the item.

Councillor Brimacombe declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the item 'Maidenhead Golf Club' as he had property and business interests in the area. He made representations on the item, then took no part in the debate or vote on the item.

200. PANEL MEMBERSHIPS

In introducing the item, Councillor Dudley thanked Councillor D. Wilson on behalf of the council and residents, for his fantastic public service during the period he was Lead Member for Planning. He also added his personal thanks.

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

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Councillor D. Wilson be appointed as Chairman, and Councillor Burbage be appointed as Vice Chairman, of the Maidenhead Development Management Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.**

201. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Monitoring Officer explained that this was an Extraordinary Full Council meeting to deal with the business specified in the agenda. The Mayor had in his discretion, and to support the council's transparency agenda, allowed public questions to be submitted on the Maidenhead Golf Club item and extended the time allowed for public questions given the number submitted.

As detailed in the constitution, there were a number of reasons why a submitted question could be rejected. These generally covered questions that were defamatory,

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frivolous or required the disclosure of confidential or exempt information. In this instance, three questions had been rejected as they would have required the disclosure of exempt information. The questions centred on commercially sensitive information which fell within the category of the 'financial and business affairs' of a particular organisation, in this case the council as well as a third party. This would include information relating to a contract which could be the subject of future legal challenge or judicial proceedings.

Dealing with the questions that had been accepted for the meeting, these questions had been considered by the Monitoring Officer in conjunction with the relevant officers. Verbal responses would be provided at the meeting by the most appropriate Cabinet Member, not necessarily the Member to whom the question was originally submitted. This was allowed under the constitution. The Members would answer as fully as they possibly could but subject to not falling within the category of exempt information. This would also apply to the substantive debate by Members on item 5.

Given the fact that the Mayor had already allowed extended time to cover all of the public questions, any supplementary questions on this occasion would need to be dealt with by way of a written answer.

- a) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

The Maidenhead Golf Course 'vision' document states that "...notable species likely to be associated with the Site will be maintained and potentially enhanced". Ecosystems are usually sensitive to an increase in any one particular species - so which particular species does RBWM envisage being 'enhanced' here and does RBWM see any risk in upsetting Maidenhead's ecosystem balance?

Councillor Coppinger responded that the Vision Document related to maintaining and enhancing the habitats used by protected and notable species. This approach was in line with national policy in the National Planning Policy Framework which stated local planning authorities should: "set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure." The NPPF also stated "When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying a series of principles...." The council would follow this approach with the site.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Hill referred to a DEFRA document entitled 'UK Biodiversity Indicators 2017'. The UK was a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity. One of the first measured goals was 'public awareness and engagement in biodiversity issues.' The vision document said that the masterplan would result in the loss of some areas of woodland habitats, off site compensation would be explored, the extent of which would depend on the detailed masterplan. However the masterplan was not going to be discussed in Part I. Was the Lead Member satisfied that the council had satisfied the DEFRA guidelines on public participation in biodiversity, understanding and engagement if they were not privy to the options how the council was dealing with the biodiversity issue?

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the supplementary question would be responded to with a written answer.

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- b) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

RBWM's new joint venture partner - Countryside - told the Maidenhead Town Forum that Hounslow council insisted upon delivering 50% affordable housing. This proves that 50% developments can be sustainable and profitable. With average house prices in Maidenhead being more than twelve times average earnings, why has RBWM chosen a paltry 30% affordable housing target?

Councillor McWilliams responded that the council would not be able to accurately comment on the viability of sites in Hounslow, a separate council. The viability study carried out for the Local Plan in the borough showed that the development of sites such as those within Maidenhead town centre would be at the margins of viability at more than 30% affordable housing. Given the council was committed to providing a range of affordable housing on the site which was obviously a key priority, it would be unwise for the council to wish things and hope they were so, and instead have a policy that actually delivered affordable housing in Maidenhead.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Hill commented that in the Local Plan not all sites would be required to achieve 30% affordable housing, for example those of fewer than 10 dwellings. This meant the borough could only achieve its goal of 30% if it aimed to put a higher percentage on land it owned. Was this the plan?

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the supplementary question would be responded to with a written answer.

- c) Paul Serjeant of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

Why have the Green Belt, and the absence of any planning permission, not been mentioned in the officer's report which is before you?

Councillor Coppinger responded that the report was not a planning report but a property report and he believed it was well known that the site was in the green belt and like any such development would require planning permission.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Serjeant asked if the Lead Member would agree that the most likely route to success for planning permission would be to have included a Green Belt review in the Local Plan?

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the supplementary question would be responded to with a written answer.

- d) Paul Serjeant of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

Is the Council arguing that there are exceptional circumstances which could support the building of a school, or schools, on this Green Belt site and if so, what are the exceptional circumstances, and what alternative sites have been considered?

Councillor Coppinger responded that yes, this was the position. The exceptional circumstances for the site including provision of education were included within the

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topic paper on the Local Plan which could be found on the council's website. It was good practice to wherever possible provide on-site infrastructure to mitigate the impact of development. As this was deliverable on this site alternative sites had not been considered.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Serjeant asked the Lead Member if he would agree that the council's most likely success in achieving planning permission for such a development would be most likely successful if a Green Belt review had been carried out so the Inspector could understand the thinking behind the site selection?

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the supplementary question would be responded to with a written answer.

- e) The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Lisa Hughes of Furze Platt Ward, asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

How many homes at the Maidenhead Golf Course development will be built to Building Regulations Part M4 (2) standards which are habitable by some people with disabilities?

Councillor Dudley responded that the local plan sought that 5% of the dwellings for proposals of more than 20 dwellings should be delivered as accessible and adaptable dwellings in accordance with building regulations part m4 (2) unless evidence could be provided to demonstrate that the impact on project viability, or of physical or environmental impact, would make such provision unsuitable.

- f) The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Lisa Hughes of Furze Platt Ward, asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

What mix of homes (houses and apartments) at the development will be built to Building Regulations Part M4 (2) standards?

Councillor Dudley responded that the council would ensure there was the right mix of homes on the site. The detailed mix would be determined as part of bringing forward a detailed site proposal and planning application with the chosen development partner which would be informed by extensive consultation. Councillor Dudley thanked the public for attending the meeting. He explained that part of the report was in Part II and Members would therefore need to consider that section in private. The actual decision would be taken in Part I. He understood that some of the issues were very challenging for people living nearby. He would be delighted to meet with individuals or groups.

- g) Christopher Frost of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

The 'Vision for the Development of Maidenhead Golf Course' does not provide a suitable blend of sustainable infrastructure relative to the demands and needs of traffic flow in and out of Shoppenhangers Road, with two entry and exit points within less than a quarter of a mile of each other. Would you agree that this problem needs more consideration in order to avoid an unacceptable level of congestion?

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Councillor Dudley responded that he would be delighted to meet with Mr Frost afterwards. The council was committed to ensuring that the site would be developed with the appropriate highways infrastructure informed by transport modelling and the council would invest with the chosen development partner in this key infrastructure alongside a range of other infrastructure. Preparatory work had been carried out on this and the work would continue until the site proposal was finalised with the development partner. In the case of Maidenhead Golf Club the realisation of the value of the Golf Club would go solely to the residents of the borough. The council would then be in a position to invest in world class infrastructure.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Frost commented that the DCLG had recently issued a consultation paper called 'Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places' and invited a consultation process. This had been spearheaded by Sajid Javid and he had asked everyone who was affected to make a proposal by email or writing. The consultation paper was to help to ensure the planning for the right homes in the right places. He asked for reassurance that the borough would use their best endeavours in exercising their skill, care and diligence to confirm to the Minister's request. Local authorities would be very clear and transparent so that every community and local area understood the scale of the housing challenge they faced. The Minister did not want local authorities wasting time on complex, inconsistent and expensive processes which only created lengthy bureaucratic arguments often behind closed doors and isolated local communities.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the supplementary question would be responded to with a written answer.

Councillor Coppinger responded that he would be delighted to meet with Mr Hudson and anyone else to discuss concerns.

h) John Hudson of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

You stated publicly on Monday 16th October that the council were setting aside £20 million for the purchase of homes to provide new access roads into the proposed MGC development. Can you please tell us which house numbers, in which roads have been identified by the council for this purpose?

Councillor Dudley responded that he would be delighted to meet with residents of Rushington Avenue. The council fully understood this would be of concern to residents and would work closely with residents at the appropriate time to reduce any worries wherever it could. Work on the assessment of transport and access routings for the site had started. This work had identified a range of potential access route options. Work was continuing on this although no final decisions had been made. Currently it was envisaged this would include the need to purchase up to eight homes around the Golf Club. The report to council, if approved, provided funding in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to acquire third party properties that would benefit access to the site through the open market and negotiation where possible.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Hudson commented that he imagined that the council had identified the houses and asked why the council could not give the numbers to residents now because it was of extreme concern to residents in the area. This was seen as a totally premature action on the part of the council. Procedures were in place with the Local Plan, established procedures. He asked why the council

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was stepping outside the procedure to take action that would blight property prices in the area and upset residents. He reminded the Leader of the Council of the promise he had made at a meeting at Sportsable over three months previously in front of the Prime Minister to give residents the plans and proposals of how the council would redress and correct the total lack of confidence, trust and faith among local residents in his leadership and the council. Why had he not given these reassurances three months later?

Councillor Dudley responded that he had established the terms of a new engagement committee of all recognised groups attending that meeting. The council would establish regular meetings under Councillor Coppinger with those groups, including Rushington Avenue Residents Association, to address the questions and concerns as the emerging Borough Local Plan process continued. This had taken three months as the council was just completing the Regulation 19 process. The council understood there were sensitivities for residents but the vital thing the council could do was to provide people with homes so that future generations could have the benefit of the opportunities of older generations. The decision would be taken as a free vote.

- i) John Hudson of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

Can you please give us the exact locations of these new access roads, which it is understood, may be off Walker Road and Rushington Avenue?

It was noted that the answer to question h) also related to question i).

- j) Jonathan Ludford of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

The officer's report talks about new transport access to the site. What work has been carried out by the Council to assess the impact of 2,000 homes and their cars, schools and other community facilities on existing transport facilities and infrastructure in the locality?

Councillor Dudley responded that the Council has undertaken transport modelling and assessment work to assess the likely impact of proposed development on traffic flows across the borough and the wider area. As stated in the response to an earlier question the site would be developed with the appropriate highways infrastructure and the council would invest with the chosen development partner in this key infrastructure alongside a range of other infrastructure. This would include new education provision on the site in the form of a 6-form entry all-through school from years Reception to Year 13 for over 2500 pupils. The receipt from the development would go to the people in the room, the council taxpayers of the borough, to invest in infrastructure.

- k) Jonathan Ludford of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

What consultation has there been with the residents who own property adjacent, or close to, the proposed new access routes to the site, and are they entirely happy about what is proposed?

Councillor Rankin responded that in planning terms a range of consultation had been carried out on the site as part of the preparation of the Borough Local Plan (BLP). Consultation on the BLP had been going on since 2009 with:

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- Issues and Options in 2009.
- Planning for the Future' in 2012.
- Preferred Options in 2014.
- Regulation 18 between 3rd December 2016 and 13th January 2017.
- Regulation 19 between 30 June 2017 and 27 September 2017.

Once a development partner had been appointed they would carry out extensive consultation as part of the development of their site proposals and preparing a planning application. This would be a similar process as was seen with the town centre joint venture.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Ludford commented that he did not think the Golf club had been part of the consultation in 2009 and 2012, rather it was more of a recent thing. Did the Lead Member believe he was wrong to think the consultation with local residents around Regulation 18 and 19 was woefully insufficient?

Councillor Rankin responded that he did not accept the characterisation and he did not think the consultation had been woefully insufficient.

l) Timothy Lloyd of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

What is the Council's timetable for applying to remove the golf course from the Green Belt?

Councillor Coppinger responded that this would be achieved through adoption of the Borough Local Plan which the council anticipated would happen in spring/ summer 2018.

m) Timothy Lloyd of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

Is it the Council's intention to inform the residents of the Borough when they commence the application to remove the Golf Course from the Green Belt?

Councillor Coppinger responded that, as stated earlier, removal from the Green Belt would be achieved through adoption of the Borough Local Plan which was anticipated to happen in spring/summer 2018. There would obviously be regular communication on this throughout the period.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Lloyd stated that he believed the council had to make a formal application to remove the land from the Green Belt. There were two Supreme Court decisions from May 2017 that may have an effect. Had the council considered this and would it make a formal application to remove the land?

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the supplementary question would be responded to with a written answer.

n) Derek Roberts of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

The loss of 132 acres of open space cannot be described as a benefit to the local community. Can the Council say what actual benefits there will be to

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residents of Maidenhead and the wider Royal Borough, arising from the intensive development of this site?

Councillor Dudley responded that the site would provide a range of benefits to existing and new residents that would include:

- New homes including 30% much needed affordable housing close to the town centre
- Educational provision for 2500 pupils
- Community infrastructure
- Public open space - only 60% of the site was to be developed
- Economic vitality and jobs for the area

Similar to the other joint venture site, where the developer had agreed to an exclusive buying period for residents of the borough and those with connections, this would be a feature of the golf club development.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Roberts commented that this would account for a 60% reduction in open space in Maidenhead. The proposal was for mainly flatted developments and because of the high density proposed these would necessarily be multi storey blocks. It was well recognised that people living in flatted developments had more social problems, did less well at school, had more health problems and so on. As Lead Member for Planning and Health how would he reconcile these two conflicting requirements?

Councillor Dudley responded that he did not agree with the view that people living in flatted developments had greater health issues and lower educational attainment. It was not correct to say that the development would all be flatted properties. The chosen development partner would bring forward more detailed plans following the OJEU process, to augment the town and give homes to people in the area where the average price was 12.5 times salary, close to the highest in southeast England.

- o) Derek Roberts of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

The Council's intention to provide 30% affordable housing on the site is noted with great interest. What mechanisms will the Council use to ensure that 30% affordable housing is actually provided, when their 'development partner' reluctantly advises them that insisting on this provision would make their scheme 'unviable'?

Councillor McWilliams responded that the Council would establish a joint venture for the site with a development partner. This would give the council considerable control over how the site was developed as the developer would not be able to progress the site unless the council agreed a site proposal and signed a site agreement. The council was committed to ensuring 30% affordable housing on the site and would ensure that happened through the Joint Venture.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Roberts asked how was the council going to ensure that the affordable housing was built to a decent size and amenity standard and was not simply the minimum the developer could get away with?

Councillor McWilliams responded that the council would ensure that these were places that people wanted to live in; it was all about getting people on to the ladder. At the same time the council needed to work out how the product would be made as



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affordable as possible; this would be part of the process. He would be happy to meet with Mr Roberts afterwards to discuss in detail.

In response to a point of order from Councillor Stretton, the Mayor explained that in order to save time, written responses would be given to enable a fuller response than one given spontaneously at the meeting. However in some cases Councillors were prepared to give supplementary answers straight away.

- p) Teresa Burton of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Rankin, Lead Member for Economic Development, Property and Finance:

Has the Council identified which homes it wants to acquire to provide access onto the Golf Course, when will homeowners be notified and will the Council proceed to compulsory purchases if the homeowners do not wish to sell?

Councillor Dudley responded that the council had done the work and identified up to 8 homes around the Golf Club. He understood the sensitivity for residents. It was hoped that all properties would be acquired through commercial negotiation and avoid CPO powers where possible.

By way of a supplementary question, Ms Burton asked if the council would be prepared to use CPO powers if the owners did not want to sell?

Councillor Dudley responded that at the moment the council had some provisional ideas for access to the site. It may be that they would be the final ones. Wherever possible the council would want to avoid using CPO powers. They would be used if necessary to build homes for the residents of the borough.

- q) Teresa Burton of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Rankin, Lead Member Economic Development, Property and Finance:

How much parking/garage space per household is envisaged in the new development?

Councillor Rankin responded that the no final decisions had been made. The council was considering the emerging masterplan. Detailed proposals would come forward with full consultation. At that time the council would ensure adequate provision of parking and other supporting infrastructure on the site. Once a development partner was appointed they would develop a site proposal, informed by consultation, which would include detailed proposals for parking arrangements and ratios.

- r) The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Naheed Majeed of Oldfield Ward, asked the following question of Councillor Saunders, Lead Member for Finance:

Do you as the Finance Lead, really think that the further expenditure of £20m, in addition to the £16.25m already paid to the Maidenhead Golf Club, and the fees to Savills on top, represents a wise use of Council taxpayers' money, given the site's Green Belt location and doubts around planning permission?

Councillor Rankin responded that the golf club site was in a highly sustainable location and was a key site to deliver housing including much needed affordable housing close to the centre of Maidenhead, alongside new education provision and community infrastructure. The council was very confident that the planning case for the site was strong. In addition, any properties purchased to facilitate access to the key site would

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retain a significant value that could be recouped even if the site was not developed. A report would be presented to Cabinet in November 2017 to detail the major capital cash-flow in the medium term.

- s) George Midgeley of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

Are Councillors aware that Maidenhead Golf Club is in the Green Belt and that planning permission would not be granted for 2,000 houses on the site, under current local and national planning policies?

Councillor Coppinger responded that the council was aware. The site would be removed from the Green Belt through adoption of the Borough Local Plan. Without a new Borough Local Plan any planning application would be judged on its merits and would be supported by very special circumstances which the council believed would be strong for this site.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Midgeley asked why the council bothered to prepare a BLP if it was just going to ignore it?

Councillor Coppinger responded that the council was required by government to have a current BLP. The council was in the midst of moving to the end of the preparation which, if accepted by the inspector, would give the powers that were sought.

- t) George Midgeley of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

Are Councillors aware that the removal of the site from the Green Belt is one of many aspects of the Draft Borough Local Plan which are being vigorously contested by local residents, and that any Green Belt release could not take place until there has been a formal Examination of the Plan, by an independent Inspector?

Councillor Coppinger responded that the council was aware of the fact but it was also aware that the Borough Local Plan could not be adopted without undergoing the examination process

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Midgeley asked why then was the council proposing to borrow money and buy properties at this stage? Why did the council not wait until the approval, not approval or moderation of the BLP took place? It was only a question of waiting a few months. The council was putting a lot of people under pressure. It was not how he would expect the council to behave.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the supplementary question would be responded to with a written answer.

- u) John Grant of Maidenhead Riverside Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

What plans does the council have for improving roads and infrastructure given the substantial expansion in the population that is planned?

Councillor Dudley responded that the council was committed to ensuring that the site would be developed with the appropriate highways infrastructure informed by transport modelling and would invest with the chosen development partner in this key

infrastructure alongside a range of other infrastructure including new education provision. Preparatory work had been carried out on this and would continue until the site proposal was finished with the development partner. A report would be presented to Cabinet in November 2017 that dealt with requirements for educational provision as part of the BLP. Investment would be in excess of £250m for over 10,000 new school places including five brand new schools. One would be on this site; another would be on the Spencer's Farm site. The BLP gave greater likelihood of increased educational provision. He fully appreciated the road situation. The council had undertaken modelling and it would be upgraded to ensure traffic moved freely. All of the proceeds from the golf club would flow to the taxpayer to be invested in infrastructure. This was not a situation where a private developer looked to minimise infrastructure to maximise profits.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Grant asked how far the modelling went?

Councillor Dudley responded that the modelling was borough-wide and looked across boundaries. The council would work with neighbouring local authorities in East Berkshire to come up with appropriate transport infrastructure to deal with housing pressure in the area.

- v) John Grant of Maidenhead Riverside Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

The golf course has a significant population of deer. Is the plan to kill them as part of the development? If not, what?

Councillor S Rayner responded that there had been over recent years an increase in the deer population in the urban landscape and across the Royal Borough. The deer population was currently at its highest for 1000 years and had doubled since 1999. This was of great concern to farmers and conservationists in relation to the impact on crops and wildlife. During the construction period the deer would move into the woodland area naturally to avoid this. There would be a large area of priority woodland reserved of 7.3 ha where they would be able to continue to forage. Thus the Royal Borough would attempt to minimise disruption and maintain the natural ecological balance.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Grant asked if this meant there was no intention to move the deer elsewhere; they would just be jammed into the little bits that were left?

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the supplementary question would be responded to with a written answer.

- w) The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Pamela Drayton of Oldfield Ward, asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

How many mature trees will be lost and do any of these have TPO's?

Councillor S Rayner responded that it was not possible at this stage to confirm the number of mature trees that would be lost. A full tree survey was being produced and would inform an arboricultural impact assessment which would inform the number of trees to be removed. The exact number of mature trees that would need to be removed would also depend on the final detailed design proposals for development of the site. However, the masterplan sought to retain wherever possible the most valuable trees and areas of woodland habitat (just over 7.3 hectares) and in particular

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to retain mature vegetation around the site boundary as well as extensive areas of the 'Deciduous Woodland' Priority Habitat.

- x) The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Pamela Drayton of Oldfield Ward, asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

What will be the effect on the present wild life?

Councillor S Rayner responded that some of the site's woodlands were designated as priority habitats and there was the potential for a range of protected or notable species to be present. The masterplan allowed for the retention of those habitats assessed as being of greatest ecological value including the larger woodland parcels, with the new built footprint falling predominantly within habitats of low ecological value. Baseline survey work was taking place and would feed into the detailed design of the masterplan through the development of strategies to avoid, mitigate or compensate for the potential impacts of the specific redevelopment proposals. Within the detailed proposals the creation of new areas of linking habitat would provide a network that connected habitats within the site and wider environment to ensure conditions for protected and notable species likely to be associated with the site would be maintained.

- y) Dr Rodney Siddons of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

Is the development legally allowed under the covenant relating to the use of the land?

Councillor Dudley responded that there was no covenant.

By way of a supplementary question, Dr Siddons asked if there ever had been a covenant?

Councillor Dudley responded that it was a myth there had ever been a covenant.

- z) Dr Rodney Siddons of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

Is it possible to see a copy of the covenant?

Councillor Dudley responded as stated before there was no covenant to provide. A copy of the title deed would be placed on the borough website.

- aa) Pauline Siddons of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

What alternative sites (e.g. a satellite village) have been considered and why is Maidenhead Golf Course preferable?

Councillor Coppinger responded that from a planning perspective, a large number of sites had been assessed through the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (2016) (HELAA), which was available on the council's website. Maidenhead Golf Course was located in a sustainable location close to the services and facilities in Maidenhead town centre and Maidenhead railway station. There were

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a large number of sites assessed in the HELAA were not proposed for allocation in the Borough Local Plan. Earlier in the plan making process the council looked at the option of establishing a new settlement that would alter the existing settlement hierarchy, but this was rejected through the Sustainability Appraisal (2014).

bb)The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Nigel Drayton of Oldfield Ward, asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

Is it morally acceptable to expect people to live in and children be schooled in an area where air quality will be poor due to pollution arising from increased traffic, coupled with the proximity to the A404M and location beneath the flight path of the third runway at Heathrow?

Councillor Coppinger responded that it would not be acceptable, but as part of the planning application process measures would be set out to promote sustainable forms of transport including walking and cycling, to both reduce reliance on private transport and any adverse impact on air quality. Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) would continue to monitor the air quality in the defined areas within the borough, which may result in recommendations for future mitigation as appropriate. The development of the third runway at Heathrow, and the path of flights leaving the airport were yet to be confirmed.

cc)The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Nigel Drayton of Oldfield Ward, asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

How is the increased traffic to be coped with by already congested local roads?

Councillor Dudley responded that had had answered the question a number of times before, but this demonstrated that it was an area of material concern for residents. He could confirm that in the consultation process for the joint venture site in the town centre, highways and parking was the issue of greatest concern to residents. The council would ensure that the work was done as necessary and as much information as possible was released into the public domain about highways works as the process continued.

dd)The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Linda Lambert of Oldfield Ward, asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

As I live in Courtlands hard against the northern corner of the golf course I have an interest in knowing which properties will be affected by the proposal to purchase properties to facilitate access to the site. Please will you let me know which properties will be affected?

Councillor Coppinger responded that the council fully understood this would be of concern to residents and would work closely with residents at the appropriate time to reduce any worries wherever possible. Work on the assessment of transport and access routings for the site had started. This work had identified a range of potential access route options. Work was continuing on this although no final decisions had been made. Currently the council envisaged this would include the need to purchase up to eight homes for a 132 acre site. It was recognised these were residents' homes. Where possible the council would endeavour to purchase without the need for CPO. The report to Council, if approved, provided funding in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to acquire

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third party properties that would benefit access to the site through the open market and negotiation where possible.

ee) The Mayor, on behalf of the absent Linda Lambert of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

A map of the site was also provided in the Advertiser. Areas A and B shown on this map are designated for high density homes. These are close to existing property, including ours. We are concerned existing housing might be overlooked, particularly as the tree line is not continuous. Please will you let us know how tall the blocks are likely to be?

Councillor Coppinger responded that a site proposal that would include the detail would not be developed until a Development Partner had been appointed. However, whilst areas A and B were likely to feature taller, higher density blocks the final layout would recognise surrounding neighbours and constraints placed and would be designed to minimise the impact in planning terms on adjacent dwellings. An example of a recently approved and built scheme in Maidenhead was Boulters Meadow with a density of 63.5 dwellings per hectare. Heights ranged from two storey houses to five storey flatted blocks but were planned to minimise the effect on neighbours.

ff) Martin Holden of Oldfield Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

Will the Vision document AND the BLP be updated to clearly reflect the planned development of Harvest Hill and include proper commentary on the combined effect of this with the golf course development in terms of infrastructure and environment because it is completely missing from the current version of the Vision document?

Councillor Rankin responded that the vision document was focused on the development of the golf course site. The Harvest Hill land was allocated within the Borough Local Plan. The council would look to work collaboratively and positively with the Golf Club and adjoining land owners at all times. This would include looking at the combined impact of development and requirements for infrastructure.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Holden asked when would it be included in the latest version so that residents could see it.

Councillor Rankin responded that he understood the land south of Harvest Hill was already included in the Borough Local Plan element on the planning side. In terms of property, that would be when the joint venture partner was in place, which was expected by July next year.

gg) Rosemary Roberts on behalf of Liz Chan-A-Sue asked the following question of Councillor Rankin, Lead Member for Economic Development and Property:

As a neighbouring resident I have had no opportunity to comment on the Masterplan (Option 1). Can the Council assure residents that the details of the masterplan will be reviewed and that they will be able to given an opportunity to put forward comments on the layout?

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Councillor Rankin responded that he was happy to make assurances. Currently it was an emerging masterplan at this stage and the council was keen to get this into the public domain as soon as possible. Work was continuing on this and once a development partner had been chosen next summer they would wish to carry out detailed work on this informed by extensive consultation prior to it being finalised. When sites were put together, there would be extensive consultation.

By way of a supplementary question, Rosemary Roberts, on behalf of Liz Chan-A-Sue commented that as someone who at best might have high rise at the bottom of the garden and at worst would lose their home, could she be assured that the opportunity would be taken seriously to listen to residents and it would not just be lip service.

Councillor Rankin responded that he would be happy to give that assurance. He referred to the town centre joint venture. Countryside had been appointed in the same way that was proposed for Maidenhead Golf Club. The partner would develop a preliminary option and consult with local residents. For the town centre, a very successful consultation had taken place in the Nicholson's Centre. Residents had overwhelmingly told the council they did not feel the plans included sufficient on-site parking. As the council maintained control this could be addressed. Countryside was now working up new proposals. The same approach would be taken with the golf club joint venture. He would ensure the literature would be sent to the residents most affected.

hh) Rosemary Roberts, on behalf of Liz Chan-A-Sue will ask the following question of Councillor Rankin, Lead Member for Economic Development and Property:

It appears the Council may vote to progress this development through a planning application as well as through the local plan process. What consultations will residents get on the application submission and if so what is the timetable for this?

Councillor Rankin responded that once a development partner was chosen they would carry out extensive consultation to inform a site proposal and then there would be further consultation on a planning application. He could not provide detailed timescales at this stage as this would be informed by the development partner to be chosen next summer but they were likely to commence initial consultation towards the end of next year.

By way of a supplementary question, Rosemary Roberts, on behalf of Liz Chan-A-Sue asked if the Lead Member was sure if the inspector did not approve the Borough Local Plan including the development of the golf club, would the council still go ahead with the planning application?

Councillor Rankin responded that from a property perspective the council considered the development of the golf club viable in a BLP world and in a non-BLP world. The council was committed to building a borough for everyone.

202. MAIDENHEAD GOLF CLUB

Members considered the emerging masterplan options for the site, the procurement route and approval of a capital budget for the acquisition of residential or commercial properties that would benefit future access to the site.

Councillor Brimacombe had declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the item therefore he made representations before the main debate. Councillor Brimacombe commented that the Leader of the Council had spoken proudly of the ambition of the Administration and at 2,000 dwellings the enterprise must surely earn the right to be called ambitious. Ambition was not a neutral concept, success was judged in hindsight and could be widely praised for its vision and achievement. Equally failure could be criticised as recklessness, over-reaching and ill-considered judgement. Members should certainly be inspired by ambition but not seduced by ambition. He advised Members to proceed with extreme caution and be aware that failure would rightly be condemned. It was also important to avoid believing that complex problems could ever be solved by simple solutions. This was very much a real-life issue that would touch the lives of many of the residents of the borough. It was not just a cash-cow with a few inconvenient details.

Councillor Brimacombe highlighted a number of questions which he believed Members should be satisfied of with answers: What was actually driving the level of housing need? Whose housing needs would be satisfied when it was built? It was important to be clear what 30% affordable housing actually meant. Would an 18 year old Janet or John in Maidenhead today truly be able to live near their parents in ten years' time in their affordable house? Would any of the properties be able to be purchased with a household income of even say £50,000 per year? If so would the capital element be given away to the first buyers such that the next generation lost out as they did with the sale of council houses? In short was this a renewable asset that reached down to include the hardworking young of subsequent generations or was this a one-time give-away? Who was it, specifically, that would be able to afford the affordable?

Councillor Brimacombe continued that it had been his experience on the council that when he had been asked to support a general principle or a 'direction of travel', and then subsequently the detail disclosed went to a place that he did not agree with, the answer he had been given was that he had voted for the issue. Councillors often found themselves in a ratchet mechanism, doors were locked and bolted behind them at each decision stage, there were no exits or escape routes. This was not his commercial experience where the level of commitment was generally commensurate with the detail offered and there were real go and no-go decisions at various stages. He cautioned Members to be comfortable with what they voted for, as they did not yet know the detail and may not be able to say no at a later point.

Councillor Brimacombe concluded by referring to the guidance of Nelson Mandela:

- Practice Listening Leadership
- Keep a proper distance from moneyed interests
- Don't surround yourself with acolytes that merely confirm your own opinions and bias
- Don't let loyalty blind you to taking the right and necessary action at the right time.



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Councillor Rankin introduced the item by explaining that when he had been knocking on doors standing for election to the council, he was often met by surprised, bemused and bewildered residents, who, when faced with a 22 year old young man on their doorsteps, could not help but wonder why he wanted to be a councillor. People found it difficult to understand why such a young person would have any interest in local politics, never mind want to stand. The reason was, despite agreeing that for the most part local representatives should be long-standing residents with a wealth of experience in their lives and communities, it was essential that there were varied voices and perspectives in decision making, and his generation's voice was one that was often sadly missing, especially in the Conservative and Unionist Party.

His generation's perspective was the need for homes. In the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, the average house price was twelve times the median income. The housing crisis, and the inter-generational injustices that it drove, was a national problem, but it was particularly acute in the local community. In the Council Plan, which was unanimously approved by Full Council earlier in the year, the council stated its vision was:

“Building a borough for everyone – where residents and businesses grow, with opportunities for all”

One of the six priorities stemming from the vision was ‘Growing Economy, Affordable Housing’. At 132 acres, Maidenhead Golf Club was large enough to accommodate 2,000 new homes including 600 affordable homes, with the supporting infrastructure. The proposals formed a critical part of the delivery of the Maidenhead Area Action Plan and would bring a new vibrancy to Maidenhead's economy and town centre, as part of the wider proposals to rejuvenate and regenerate Maidenhead.

The Royal Borough was the owner of the freehold of the golf club and had agreed to purchase the leasehold of the golf course somewhere between September 2019 and September 2023. In June 2017, the Council took the decision to design and procure a process to develop the golf club. The report before Members was the result of the initial work undertaken by the consultant Savills. To ensure an appropriate level of transparency the council had put as much information as possible into the public domain. He had been delighted that the Mayor had agreed to take public questions, to extend the deadline for submission and to increase the amount of time usually available for public questions.

The proposals were transformational for both Maidenhead and the wider Borough and the council was committed to releasing as much information into the public domain as possible, as proactively as possible and engaging with residents. The first appendix to the paper laid out the compelling Vision for Maidenhead Golf Club. It set out the sustainability and deliverability of the proposal in planning terms and painted a picture of a welcoming and sensitively designed place, with a strong sense of identity where mature woodland formed an integral part of the development. The second appendix documented the emerging Masterplan Options. The council had released as much detail as it was able to of the preferred option into the public domain. It was not proposed to develop the entirety of the site, leaving 40% of the golf club undeveloped with significant open space and the deciduous woodland remaining. The masterplan also showed plans for future educational provision for the borough in the form of a Reception through to Year 13 school for 2,500 pupils. The school would by far be the largest in the borough. The third appendix detailed the procurement options. The

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recommended option was for a contractual joint venture structure where the council would maintain complete control over the development.

To help Members and residents understand that process, the borough would procure a partner, not a scheme. The partner would be selected through a formal scoring mechanism in an OJEU compliant process. It was envisioned that that process would be complete by the end of July 2018. The council would then work with the partner to develop proposals and as had been done with the proposals at York Road and West Street within the Town Centre Joint Venture, full consultation on the plans with all stakeholders, including all adjoining residents, would occur. The plans in the agenda were emerging high-level masterplans and Members and residents would have significant engagement before any planning applications were launched.

There was a further proposal of a capital budget of £20m to purchase residential and commercial properties to provide highways access. The funding was being requested at this stage to give as much flexibility as possible and allow the council to conduct purchases in a negotiated and opportunistic way. This would be far preferable than the council having to use powers at the last minute. The highway capacity was of great concern to many residents and the report made it clear that the council would put in significant capital investment to ensure this was adequately addressed. The concern was raised at scrutiny with regards to the oversight of the budget before the adoption of the Borough Local Plan. The recommendations from scrutiny had been adopted in full in the revised recommendation.

The council was committed to:

- building a borough for everyone
- providing a growing economy and to deliver affordable homes
- delivering the Maidenhead Area Action Plan in a way that was value for money for taxpayers
- the successful regeneration of Maidenhead.

The report showed how the council was making progress on all the commitments.

Councillor Stretton explained that she had been approached by the Directors of the Maidenhead Golf Club because they had concerns about the statements made in council meetings and to the Maidenhead Advertiser that were in direct conflict with the contract with golf club. Representatives of the golf club had submitted questions for the meeting to seek assurances the contract would be adhered to; these questions had been rejected on the grounds of exempt information. The contract had no clause relating to confidentiality and the only confidentiality document they had signed related to discussions prior to the contract. She asked why the Leader could make public statements that undermined the contract, but the golf club was unable to ask questions or receive reassurance that the very same contract would be honoured.

Councillor Stretton quoted from an article in the Maidenhead Advertiser from the previous week:

‘The contract does state that the availability of Maidenhead Golf Club development was dependent on both the golf course and the land at Harvest Hill being adopted within the BLP. The BLP would be considered by the Inspector in early 2018. If the plan is not approved or one or other of the site is rejected, the contract becomes null

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and void and there was no contractual obligation for the golf course to give up the lease prior to the end of their current lease in 2039. If the Plan is approved, then the contract would come into force'.

She had been told that the golf club would then bring to its Members the decision to decide how long they should remain on the site. The contract stated that the earliest date would be 2019, the latest 2023. The golf club continued to plan for the future in accordance with the contract and were seeking an alternative site. If it agreed to move to a new location, the earliest time playing could start would be spring 2022 therefore this was the earliest the borough could begin site preparation. The golf club was requesting assurance the contract would be kept to in full, therefore she called for a commitment from Councillor Rankin to meet with the golf club and give the assurances they requested.

Councillor Rankin confirmed that he would be very happy to attend such a meeting.

Councillor Hill stated that he was disappointed with the way the supplementary questions had been dealt with. The first he had heard about the report had been angry calls from residents pointing him to an article on the Maidenhead Advertiser website. The borough was proposing to spend £20m of council taxpayer money to demolish residents' houses, build roads on residents' land and the developer would walk away with the profit. Residents felt that there had not been any open or transparent consultation. The report was in his opinion, years too early. Buying properties at this point represented outrageous and unnecessary property speculation. At a meeting earlier that day with members, it had been made clear that they wanted the BLP process reinstated and full consultation with all agencies, Lead Members, Ward Members and anyone planning to develop the site. They wanted an independent inspector to review the Borough Local Plan at an appropriate time in the process for the golf club. To do anything else would set a dangerous precedent. He urged Members to vote down the proposal for the sake of good governance.

Councillor Majeed commented that he was disappointed that elected Members had not been able to answer any of the supplementary questions. He wished for Members to vote against the proposal and full consultation to take place before it was presented again. The council was opening itself up to serious legal challenge in a number of ways. He did not see any mention of the neighbours' concerns about density or TPOs. There was also no reference to the Chairman of the golf club's concerns about the contract being subject to the BLP being approved and the issues of both sites on either side of Harvest Hill Road. This was a question to Councillor Dudley. If these questions could not be answered, he asked Members to vote against the proposal.

Councillor Majeed explained that on the borough website under reasons restricted it stated that information was not exempt if it related to proposed developments if the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission. Was the Lead Member for Planning happy that everything that should have been in Part I was in Part I? The council could be legally challenged on this.

Councillor Majeed asked Councillor Targowska if there were any restrictions on the gifting of the golf course to Royal Borough residents? To Councillor Rankin he asked if all options for accessing the golf course been considered, for example off the A308, which would save £20m. To Councillor Saunders, he asked how would council tax increase if the council were to service the £20m debt on the assumption the rental

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income would not cover the cost. He also asked what would the potential loss be if the houses had to be re-sold?

Councillor Majeed asked Members to vote the proposal down until the BLP had been adopted, until any misunderstandings with the golf club had been confirmed and not to commit council taxpayer cash unnecessarily. The vote was meant to be a free vote. He urged councillors to use this and prove that all Members would consider voting for the residents and not be 'nodding dogs'. He urged councillors to vote with their conscience to delay the proposals until the council knew where it was with the BLP, the legal interpretation of the contract with the golf course and the clarification of restricted information.

Councillor D. Wilson commented that he was in a difficult position as Ward Member for Oldfield and the former Lead Member for Planning. The BLP was the only process to review Green Belt boundaries, therefore the due process would be the examination in public. Regulation 18 was carried out over a six week period and Regulation 19 over a longer period as an additional month was given. The responses were currently being analysed and submission was likely in January 2018 with an examination 10 weeks later. Once this occurred, there would be ample opportunity for developers, landowners and residents to put forward representations in the public domain.

Councillor D. Wilson thought that the report was a little premature and had caused angst for local residents especially those that backed onto the golf course. The recommendation was to spend £20m to purchase properties but no-one knew which properties had been identified. This effectively blighted properties in the area. A joint venture partner was likely to be appointed in July 2018, which would well be after the examination. This would mean consultation at the end of 2018. As a major planning application, it would be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, requiring a 16 week consultation. The application would then go to the Borough-wide Development Management Panel and would need very special circumstances to proceed to the next stage, potential referral to the Secretary of State and a likely public enquiry.

Councillor Walters commented that he did not dislike the scheme but he had spent all his working life undertaking such financial appraisals and it was a shame that he had not been involved as his experience may have been of use. He was nervous that this was a hasty procedure.

Councillor Werner agreed that there was a desperate need for affordable housing. However there was no evidence that any of the proposed development would be truly affordable. He asked what definition of affordable was being used? An 80/20 split had been suggested, which would be completely unaffordable to most young people. His first home had been bought at four times salary – would any of the homes on this site be available at four times average salary? The report was lacking in detail and supplementary questions had not been answered. There was no evidence of traffic modelling in the report. There was a need for schools and three options were listed but there was no evidence for the type to choose. The report was not clear on the issue of biodiversity. On this basis he felt that the proposal should wait until the BLP had been approved. The council was not communicating well to residents, who should have been spoken to in the run up to the council making the decision, not afterwards.

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Councillor Hunt explained that the Neighbourhood Plan in her area included rural exception housing that was only available to local people and was held in perpetuity for the local community. One quarter of houses would be built for private sale to cover the cost of the rural exception houses. The golf club site would have only 30% affordable housing and it was not clear where it would go in the next generation. She understood the concerns of the younger generation but they could not afford the houses being built. She therefore asked the question, for whom were the houses being built? There was a huge waiting list for social housing and this was a concern. She felt the report had been brought to Members a little too soon.

Councillor Hilton understood the concerns of residents as there were a number of unknowns however he wondered if people in Maidenhead knew that the Ascot area was facing the same level of development, with an increase of approximately 25% new homes being built. This included the regeneration of Ascot High Street and removal of land in the Green Belt. A public consultation in 2016 by the landowner had been a disaster with little information provided. However a follow up questionnaire showed the majority responded that houses should be smaller and more affordable, which would increase the density. Many were against the proposals but just as many recognised the need for housing and remained silent. Many councillors at the meeting were speaking on behalf of this silent majority.

Councillor Da Costa stated that the report was premature and should be re-presented. Councillors were not being given sufficient information to ensure that they made good, optimal decisions for the benefit of residents. £20m was proposed but there was no evidence as to why. What were the parameters and assurances for its use? Would the council give the housing purchased for social use as well? Where was the money coming from? This was more speculative borrowing, at a time when interest rates were set to rise. There was little or no information on the masterplan. Three options for schooling were given but there was no justification compared to needs. There was no assurance of housing that locals could actually afford or benchmarking with best practice of any kind. There was no assessment of the cash flows, risks, funding requirements, or borrowing costs which would affect council tax. There was no explanation of the money spent on professionals, legal advisers or consultants and he requested a plan and budget. Councillor Da Costa also asked for a road map to control the process for the Golf Club development, to ensure it stayed on track. Councillors were promised to be shown the big picture financial plans for Maidenhead Regeneration including the golf club, the cash flows and the risks so Members could understand how each project presented fitted into the overall plan, how it affected the risk and returns for residents. Councillors had yet to be presented with this information. He asked why Councillors had been asked to attend yet another Extraordinary meeting at short notice and why had this not been included in a forward plan or included in this years or next year's budget.

He also asked why the Leader of the Opposition had been consulted about the dates, to help ensure good scrutiny. Councillor Da Costa felt it would be better to re-present this report with a complete package of information, planned in advance.

Councillor E. Wilson stated that the paper was an enabling one and was not a planning application. The report intended to bring information into the public domain. It had been sent to Full Council when it could have gone to the Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee only, so that the facts could be shared as early as possible. He agreed with one of the public speakers, Mr Holden, that a timeline would be helpful to

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explain the purpose of the £20m and demonstrate to affected residents that they would not be out of pocket. Liaison with ward councillors would be important. The council was looking for a partner not a scheme; the schemes would come later. He asked when 'later' would be? He would support the paper but requested reassurances on timing.

Councillor N. Airey commented that the council needed to build houses to provide aspirations for young people to stay in the area. In November 2017, Cabinet would receive a report detailing school place need over a 20 year period. Planning and Education would work together on the various options. Regular monitoring and reporting to Cabinet and Council would take place.

Councillor Smith stated that he had no problem supporting the scheme as future generations needed houses and schools more than a golf course. Members had heard that the council would wish to proceed with the scheme with or without the BLP and without knowing how green belt status would be affected by that. The concerned properties were already blighted therefore it was incumbent on the council to un-blight them at the earliest possible opportunity. If the Council gave a positive vote, this should not be at the detriment of residents by increasing the blight. He therefore requested a positive undertaking by the Executive that un-blighting properties would be at the top of their list when further plans were known.

Councillor Grey commented that the extremes of emotion were not unusual but people were missing the main objective of building much needed houses. Most people in attendance at the meeting were mature and settled. He was also in this position. However he highlighted that many of those present would have children and grandchildren who had little chance of being able to afford a property in the area as the average price was 12 times the average salary. He had confidence in officers and councillors to make the borough the best place in the country to live in. It would benefit residents to secure the future of their children.

Councillor D. Evans commented that he moved out of London many years previously to live in the area. Ward councillors were rightly reflecting the views of residents. The role of councillor was however not to just fight for individual residents on one particular issues but to undertake a duty to the whole of the borough. If the Council said no to the proposal, the houses would still be built as the site fitted into the regeneration programme which would be of benefit to all residents, including the silent majority not present at the meeting. He fully understood the concerns about property blight. By moving to the next stage clarity would be brought to the process. He would act on his conscience and take a balanced judgement. The proposal was a reasonable and practical approach to the difficult situation of delivering houses.

Councillor Beer reported that Councillor Jones had been unable to attend due to a prior arrangement, fixed six months previously. He commented that the BLP had not been approved unanimously earlier in the year, a number of councillors had voted against the proposal. He questioned why, if approved, the masterplan and procurement option would begin on 3 November 2017 as this was only a week away. So many things had yet to be resolved. There was no provision of on-site plans or anywhere for car parking. The report was far too premature. He had been the Opposition representative on the Local Plans Working Group before it had ceased to meet. He was still supportive of the principle but the council needed to get its ducks in a row first. Matters still to be resolved should be referred to the Planning and Housing

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Overview and Scrutiny Panel. It was not necessary for it to consider Council items but there was nothing to say this should not happen. Affordable housing figures related to those on average salary. He questioned what happened to those below this threshold?

Councillor McWilliams referred to the council's Homelessness Strategy which included a simple diagram to demonstrate the different types of affordable housing including social housing, affordable rent, intermediate products such as rent to buy and shared ownership. It was important to avoid what happened in the 1980s with a large sell off of affordable property. Affordable rent products would be protected. Shared ownership would take a very long time to staircase up to the full 100% therefore often people used it as a first step on the ladder and sold their share back to the market. Therefore affordable housing would not last in perpetuity but for a very long time. Products such as Community Land Trusts meant certain areas of land were protected in perpetuity. The council was looking at all options.

Councillor Dudley stated that he recognised this was an emotive issue. The council wanted to work with the community. He congratulated the Oldfield councillors for representing their ward. The purpose of the paper was to remove any property blight as quickly as possible. The development would go ahead with or without the BLP. By starting the OJEU process now, proposals could be developed with the joint venture partner from July 2018. It was simply wrong to believe you bring down the BLP and the golf course development would not happen. The council would honour its contract with the golf club but it was wrong to presume that the development was dependent on the BLP. It was also wrong to believe there was a covenant on the land. The site was viable and because of this it would include affordable housing. This would be all through the salary spectrum if possible, including social housing and affordable rent. In relation to the financial risk, during the period properties were held they would be subject to being leased out. The yield on renting residential property was greater than the costs to service the debt. All spending had been approved through the usual budgetary process. The reason for an Extraordinary Council meeting was that the decision could have been taken at a Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee but the council wanted to be as visible and transparent as possible on the issue.

Councillor Rankin concluded the debate. He respectfully rejected the assertion that the report was premature. In June 2017 he had been given delegated authority to design and procure a process to develop the golf course. From that work the emerging masterplan had been on his desk. It would be wrong for him to have sat on them any longer and he stood behind the decision to bring them to Full Council. The landholdings were worth a significant amount to the borough and Members had given assurances that all potential receipts would be invested in infrastructure. In relation to financial risk the longer the time period the council had access to the budget, the more options were available in terms of highways access. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel had requested amendments to the recommendations and these had been accepted. In relation to a timeline, he explained that a development partner would be appointed in July 2018 and would then take the work undertaken by the consultant to do further work on the masterplan and develop options. They would be put in front of Members and the public by the end of 2018.

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

**RESOLVED: That Council notes the report and:**

- a. Approves a capital budget of £20,000,000 be included in the Capital Programme for the acquisition of residential or commercial properties that will benefit future access to the Golf Course development site.
- b. Approves the emerging masterplan (Option 1) for the redevelopment of Maidenhead Golf Course
- c. Approves the proposed procurement route (Option 7, Contractual Joint Venture Partnership)
- d. Endorses the decisions of Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee to:
  - Delegate authority to the Executive Director with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property to acquire residential or commercial properties that will benefit future access to the Golf Course development site.
  - That the Lead Member for Economic Development and Property and Lead Member for Finance seek the support of Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel with regards to the acquisition of properties before the successful adoption of the Borough Local Plan.
  - Agrees that in the interim period, any residential properties acquired can be utilised by RBWM Property Company for rental purposes for local residents or key workers.
  - Agrees to consult at appropriate times as detailed proposals are brought forward by the development partner, the terms of such developments with local residents and ward councillors.

(41 Councillors voted for the motion: Councillors M. Airey, N. Airey, Alexander, Bateson, Bhatti, Bicknell, Bowden, Bullock, Carroll, Clark, Coppinger, Cox, Dudley, D. Evans, L. Evans, Grey, Hilton, Hunt, Ilyas, Kellaway, Lenton, Lion, Love, Luxton, McWilliams, Mills, Muir, Pryer, Quick, Rankin, C. Rayner, S. Rayner, Richards, Sharma, Sharpe, Shelim, Smith, Story, Targowska, E. Wilson and Yong. 6 councillors voted against the proposal: Councillors Beer, Da Costa, Hill, Majeed, Stretton and Werner. Two Councillors abstained: Councillors Walters and D. Wilson. Councillors Diment and Brimacombe did not take part in the debate or vote).

203. 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 item 7 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act



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