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Notice of Meeting

Council

Councillors Neil Knowles (Chair), Simon Bond (Vice-Chair), Clive Baskerville, Adam Bermange, George Blundell, David Buckley, Mandy Brar, Catherine Del Campo, Alison Carpenter, Richard Coe, Suzanne Cross, Carole Da Costa, Wisdom Da Costa, Devon Davies, Karen Davies, Jack Douglas, Genevieve Gosling, Jodie Grove, Geoff Hill, Mark Howard, Maureen Hunt, Lynne Jones, Ewan Larcombe, Sayonara Luxton, Asghar Majeed, Siân Martin, Chris Moriarty, Helen Price, Gary Reeves, Joshua Reynolds, Julian Sharpe, George Shaw, Gurch Singh, Kashmir Singh, John Story, Helen Taylor, Amy Tisi, Julian Tisi, Leo Walters, Simon Werner and Mark Wilson

www.rbwm.gov.uk



Tuesday 25 July 2023 7.00 pm

Council Chamber - Town Hall - Maidenhead & on [RBWM YouTube](#)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Evans'.

**Stephen Evans
Chief Executive**

Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1	Apologies for Absence To receive any apologies for absence	
2	Council Minutes To receive the minutes of the budget meeting of the Council held on 21 February 2023, the Annual Meeting held on 23 May 2023 and the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 27 June 2023.	7 - 50
3	Declarations of Interest To receive any declarations of interest	51 - 52
4	Mayor's Communications To receive such communications as the Mayor may desire to place before the Council	53 - 54
5	Public Questions a) Thomas Wigley of Clewer East ward will ask the following question of Councillor K Davies, Lead member for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Windsor Town Council At the Council meeting on 22nd November last year RBWM promised to install three new air pollution monitors. Please can you provide a status	

	<p>update regarding their implementation and RBWM's current views regarding their intended physical location.</p> <p>b) Following legal advice this question has been removed from the agenda</p> <p>c) Tina Quadrino of Pinkneys Green will ask the following question of Councillor Werner, Leader of the Council and Lead member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection and Maidenhead</p> <p>When you took office in May, you committed to a review of the Borough Local Plan. Please can you tell us what form this review will take and when we will hear the outcome of it?</p> <p>d) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill ward will ask the following question of Councillor Bermange, Lead member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management</p> <p>Given that the Planning Inspectorate found clearly that RBWM breached the Human Rights Act in the Nicholson CPO process, failing to treat legitimate concerns with even basic "respect", why did Council officers try to excuse this outrageous behaviour until the last minute, and how much do you expect the settlement of both avoidable judicial reviews to cost taxpayers?</p> <p>e) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill ward will ask the following question of Councillor Bermange, Lead member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management</p> <p>Does RBWM accept that members of the public should never be criticised by Councillors or officers, expressly or implicitly, for exerting their annual rights to submit questions and objections under the Local Audit & Accountability Act 2014?</p> <p><i>The Council will set aside a period of 30 minutes to deal with public questions, which may be extended at the discretion of the Mayor in exceptional circumstances. The Member who provides the initial response will do so in writing. The written response will be published as a supplement to the agenda by 5pm one working day before the meeting. The questioner shall be allowed up to one minute to put a supplementary question at the meeting. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the reply provided and shall not have the effect of introducing any new subject matter. A Member responding to a supplementary question will have two minutes to respond).</i></p>	
6	<p>Petition for debate: Bus Service for Wraysbury</p> <p>Henry Perez of Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury Ward has submitted the following petition for debate:</p> <p><i>We the undersigned petition the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead to provide a bus service to all main roads in Wraysbury keeping residents connected with vital services including Datchet Health Centre as well as our two local villages of Horton and Datchet plus Windsor Town Centre. The borough has current funding to support this inline with the Government</i></p>	

	<p><i>National Bus Strategy, if not, the bus service should be funded by RBWM.</i></p> <p>Full information about the petition, context and signatures can be viewed on the petition pages of the website.</p> <p>The Constitution provides for a maximum time of 30 minutes for Members to debate petitions; this can be extended at the Mayor's discretion.</p> <p>a) The Mayor will invite the Lead Petitioner to address the meeting (5 minutes maximum)</p> <p>b) The Mayor to invite the relevant Cabinet Member to speak, including proposing any recommendation in the report (5 minutes maximum)</p> <p>c) The Mayor to ask for the motion to be seconded</p> <p>d) Motions without Notice (other than those detailed in Part 2 C13 of the constitution) will not be allowed.</p> <p>e) The Mayor to invite any relevant Ward Councillors to speak (5 minutes maximum each)</p> <p>f) The Mayor will invite all Members to debate the matter (Rules of Debate as per the Constitution apply)</p>	
7	<p>Petitions</p> <p>To receive any petitions presented by Members on behalf of residents.</p> <p><i>(Notice of the petition must be given to the Head of Governance not later than noon on the last working day prior to the meeting. A Member submitting a Petition may speak for no more than 2 minutes to summarise the contents of the Petition).</i></p>	
8	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report</p> <p>To note the report and consider the work of Overview and Scrutiny in the 2022/23 municipal year.</p>	55 - 74
9	<p>Councillors' Questions</p> <p>a) Councillor Larcombe will ask the following question of Councillor Coe, Lead member for Environmental Services</p> <p>It is twenty years since the 2003 flood event and nearly ten years since the two 2014 flood events. Datchet, Horton, Wraysbury and Old Windsor still have no flood alleviation scheme after Channel One was removed from the River Thames Scheme in July 2020. Why is my area knowingly left at ever-increasing risk of flooding?</p> <p>b) Councillor Larcombe will ask the following question of Councillor</p>	

	<p style="text-align: center;">Coe, Lead member for Environmental Services</p> <p>The former administration passed a motion on 27/9/2022 to request that the Environment Agency resumes dredging of the River Thames within the boundaries of RBWM. Another year has passed. What progress has been made please?</p> <p><i>(The Council will set aside a period of 30 minutes to deal with Member questions, which may be extended at the discretion of the Mayor in exceptional circumstances. The Member who provides the initial response will do so in writing. The written response will be published as a supplement to the agenda by 5pm one working day before the meeting. The questioner shall be allowed up to one minute to put a supplementary question at the meeting. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the reply provided and shall not have the effect of introducing any new subject matter. A Member responding to a supplementary question will have two minutes to respond).</i></p>	
10	<p>Motions on Notice</p> <p>a) By Councillor Hill</p> <p>This council agrees to reduce the number of signatures required for a petition to come to full council from 1500 to 1000.</p> <p>b) By Councillor K Davies</p> <p>This council agrees to undertake a community governance review examining the issue of whether a new town council for the currently unparished parts of Windsor should be formed.</p> <p>c) By Councillor Taylor</p> <p>We, as members of the council and representatives of the Borough, agree to make a conscious effort to increase our Social Media postings about local businesses and services, to encourage our residents to try new local services and venues.</p> <p>d) By Councillor Price</p> <p>I propose that the Council adopts the following motion to apply immediately to all council meetings where part 2 is used due to legal restrictions or commercially sensitive reasons.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) From this date onwards all Cabinet and Full Council meetings that have to move into Part 2 have abbreviated minutes published after the meeting attached to the Part 1 minutes to reflect the decision made subsequent to voting. This will not reveal the detail or report at this stage. 2) That a full explanation of the conditions that cause the information or report to be placed in part 2 is made at that time. 3) If and when those conditions no longer apply – and at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer - the part two reports or information is then published in the minutes of the original meeting and a note made during the next 	

	<p>Council or Cabinet meeting following this publication.</p> <p>4) That these same rules are applied to historic Part 2 meetings, and that a periodic review takes place – subject to officer capacity and resource availability. The decision of the Monitoring Officer – in consultation with the Chief Executive - will be final in terms of any historical reports being released in this way.</p> <p>5) That this rule does not override GDPR, commercial or personal confidentiality and any other legal consideration that would prevent release at any time.</p> <p><i>(A maximum period of 30 minutes will be allowed for each Motion to be moved, seconded and debated, including dealing with any amendments. At the expiry of the 30-minute period debate will cease immediately, the mover of the Motion or amendment will have the right of reply before the Motion or amendment is put to the vote).</i></p>	
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By attending this meeting, participants are consenting to the audio & visual recording being permitted and acknowledge that this shall remain accessible in the public domain permanently.

Please contact Kirsty Hunt, kirsty.hunt@rbwm.gov.uk, with any special requests that you may have when attending this meeting.

Published: Monday 17 July 2023

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

COUNCIL - 21.02.23

AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber - Town Hall - Maidenhead on Tuesday 21 February 2023

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Christine Bateson), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Gary Muir)

Councillors John Story, Clive Baskerville, Gurpreet Bhangra, Simon Bond, Mandy Brar, Catherine Del Campo, David Cannon, Gerry Clark, David Coppinger, Carole Da Costa, Wisdom Da Costa, Jon Davey, Karen Davies, Phil Haseler, David Hilton, Maureen Hunt, Andrew Johnson, Greg Jones, Lynne Jones, Neil Knowles, Ewan Larcombe, Sayonara Luxton, Ross McWilliams, Samantha Rayner, Joshua Reynolds, Julian Sharpe, Shamsul Shelim, Gurch Singh, Donna Stimson, Chris Targowski, Amy Tisi, Leo Walters and Simon Werner

OFFICERS: Tony Reeves and Emma Duncan, Adele Taylor, Andrew Durrant, Kevin McDaniel, Andrew Vallance, Nikki Craig, Louise Freeth and Jane Cryer

126. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Bowden, Stewart Carroll, Geoffrey Hill and Helen Price.

Councillors John Baldwin and Helen Taylor were in attendance remotely and took no part in the vote on any item.

127. COUNCIL MINUTES

Councillor Hunt proposed an amendment to be made at minute 125 relating to motion a) to insert the following sentence indicated in bold:

In response to a point of order raised by Councillor Hunt, the Mayor ruled that Councillor Werner had broken the rules relating to the conduct and standard of debate and requested Councillor Werner to desist from making similar comments. **The Mayor requested Councillor Werner apologise which he refused to do.** As Councillor Werner refused the Mayor excluded him from speaking further during the remainder of the debate.

Councillor Davey requested an amendment be made at minute 125 relating to motion a) to the following wording:

Councillor Davey thanked David Knowle Leeks for ensuring that the matter was progressed.

Councillor Del Campo requested an amendment be made at minute 125 relating to motion c) to the following wording:

Councillor Del Campo said she was mindful to support the motion and commented upon the need for the Council to pick up the pace.

Subject to the amendments made above it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2023 be approved.

In response to a question the Mayor confirmed that Councillors should stand when addressing her and agreed that Councillor Carole Da Costa would be exempt from that rule.

128. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared.

129. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

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

130. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- a) **Ed Wilson of Clewer and Dedworth West ward asked the following question of Councillor Bhangra, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Parks and Countryside**

How much money has RBWM saved by switching to fortnightly black bin collections?

Written response: *The changes were not introduced specifically as a cost saving exercise, in fact the council launched its revised waste collection regime in October 2021 to drive an increase in recycling rates in the borough and decrease the volume of waste produced to help increase its recycling rate to at least 65%. This contributes to the council's Environment and Climate Strategy, which includes a commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest.*

The move to fortnightly waste collections came with additional waste collection costs, which were reported at the time and additional funds made available in the budget to cover these. The move to fortnightly waste collections has resulted in a decrease in waste disposal costs as waste moves from black bins into food waste, garden waste and recycling bins, or waste minimisation behaviour change takes place and less is thrown away which has mitigated some of the additional costs.

Ed Wilson enquired as a supplementary whether there had been a decrease in waste disposal costs whilst the payment to the Waste contractor had gone up? He referred to a report which he stated indicated a saving of £175,000 and then a year later the Council was advised a further £500,000 was required to be spent. He asked for clarification.

Councillor Bhangra replied that he would ask officers to look into the specifics of his question.

- b) **Ed Wilson of Clewer and Dedworth West ward asked the following question of Councillor Rayner, Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor**

What provision has been made in the budget for investment in Windsor's public toilets?

Written response: *The draft capital budget has identified £30k to invest in public conveniences in 23/24, there is also approximately £34k in the revenue budget which goes towards maintaining the public conveniences.*

Ed Wilson asked how much the Council has invested in Windsor's public conveniences in the last three years.

Councillor Rayner replied that she would ask officers to respond to him in due course.

- c) **Sunil Sharma of Cox Green ward asked the following question of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Growth & Opportunity**

Does Councillor Johnson agree with me that it is important RBWM does not burden our children and grandchildren with unsustainable public debt that leads to higher taxes for them in the future?

Written response: *The Council has borrowed money to finance vital assets, but as you can see from the capital cashflow included within the budget papers (Appendix 4 Annex D p203), the Council is on course to pay off most of its debt over the next 12 years.*

Sunil Sharmer reiterated his published question and Councillor Johnson replied that like other public authorities they had borrowed money to invest in activities. The administration had inherited debt at the start, he stated he did not want to burden future generations and the upcoming budget set out a long term plan to reduce debt whilst continuing to invest in the Council's core priorities.

d) Ian Haggart of Clewer and Dedworth East ward asked the following question of Councillor Cannon, Cabinet Member for Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime, and Public Protection

Reduction of crime is important to many residents of the Royal Borough. Can the Cabinet Member expand or comment on the local priorities for the additional four Neighbourhood Police Officers that The Royal Borough is proposing to fund for the next three years?

Written response: *The four extra police officers will be dedicated to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in the Royal Borough and are proposed to be recruited to support community safety and enhance local partnership working between the council and police. They will address key local crime issues and anti-social behaviour affecting communities and the environment.*

The main objective will be to focus on the joint priorities outlined in the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) strategy 2022-25. The key purpose of the CSP is to ensure a partnership approach is taken to tackle crime and disorder and improve the quality of life of our residents. This extends beyond just policing and is about promoting stronger communities, in partnership with local stakeholders, to ensure all agencies prioritise safeguarding and put residents first.

CSP Priorities:

- Working with our communities to reduce the likelihood of being exploited and protecting our most vulnerable from harm*
- Reducing the negative impact of violent on communities*
- Tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG)*
- Provide support for individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation and extremism leading to terrorism through the Channel/Prevent process*
- Develop out partnership resilience and agility to respond to local crime and safety issues*

We are holding a Community Safety, Crime & Anti-social behaviour summit on 17 March to help identify which local policing and community safety issues and areas should be the initial priorities for the extra police officers and our enhanced partnership working.

Ian Haggart did not have a supplementary question.

e) Ian Haggart of Clewer and Dedworth East ward asked the following question of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Growth & Opportunity

Written response: *The public are encouraged by Government to reduce their energy-use footprint and move to a low carbon future. Can the Leader of the Council confirm that the Royal Borough will continue to offer a free permit to residents owning Electric Vehicles, to park in Council car parks, for the next year fiscal year?*

The council has no plans to introduce charges for electric vehicle parking permits in 2023/24.

Ian Haggart did not have a supplementary question.

- f) Adam Bermange of Boyn Hill ward asked the following question of Councillor Hilton, Cabinet Member for Asset Management & Commercialisation, Finance, & Ascot**

Saving PLA04S of £50k is to be achieved by charging out a portion of the Sustainability and Climate Change Team's staff time to grant and developer-funded projects but could the Lead Member please confirm the total budget for this team and it's organisational structure including the total number of Full-Time Equivalent?

Written response: The Sustainability and Climate Team was established after the Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. It now has 10.6 FTE's. It is responsible for delivery of the Council's Environment & Climate Strategy and is made up of Officers with specialisms in the natural environment, energy, flooding and the circular economy. The staffing budget for the team is £335,870.

Adam Bermange asked whether Councillor Hilton agreed with him that the plan to recharge a portion of the budget and that of the Climate Partnership against a finite level of capital funding inevitably creates an opportunity cost to direct investment in future sustainability projects.

Councillor Hilton reiterated that the Sustainability and Climate Team had come together over a short period time to create a significant force to move the programme forward. No project manages itself and the team are a fundamental cost to the project. He recognised that when running multiple projects it may be necessary to bring in external support and the associated costs would be specific to that project.

- g) Mohammed Ilyas of Belmont ward asked the following question of Councillor Carroll, Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation**

It is great to note the increase of £11m to the DSG for 2023-24. Please could you inform as to how much of this will be allocated to issues relating to the impact of the pandemic on areas such as pupil catch up on gaps in learning.

Written response: Thank you for your question. The total Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for RBWM is £151m for 2023-24 which will help maintain the high standards of education in the Borough. In addition to this funding schools also receive direct funding from the Department for Education for Pupil Premium which is targeted at those on low income and eligible for Free School meals. This is estimated to be £3.7m for 3,200 young people who need the extra help. This funding is very welcome and will help our schools continue to focus on reducing the gaps in learning for our children. The Department for Education has previously also funded additional Covid-catchup grant directly to schools and that programme ceased in August 2022.

Mohammed Ilyas asked a supplementary question whether the Council were putting in additional funding in particular for provision to address the wellbeing of pupils?

Councillor Johnson replied that the Council would be looking to secure additional investment and did believe the wellbeing of all young people in Windsor and Maidenhead was of paramount importance. He stated one of his administration's objectives was about achieving genuine social value from some of the Council's larger partner organisations and businesses to move this agenda forward.

- h) Julian Tisi of Clewer East ward asked the following question of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Growth & Opportunity**

The Major Capital Cash Flows schedule (Appendix 4, Annex D) identifies that, over 13 years, capital receipts of £295m are proposed to flow to the Council from residential and commercial projects. Could the Leader confirm, broadly, what proportion of those receipts are expected to relate to the development and disposal of the Maidenhead Golf Course?

Written response: *Approximately 75% of the receipts would arise from Maidenhead Golf Course. However, most of these are due after the period of the current Medium Term Financial Plan.*

Julian Tisi explained that a combination of the Liberal Democrats assessment of the current Market value of receipts from Maidenhead Golf Course would be a reduced amount of £120million and interest rates led to concerns about the repayment plan. He asked what confidence residents could have in the financial management of the administration and the credibility of its financial plan.

Councillor Johnson replied that he was confident in the financial management of the administration, the value of land fluctuated but was clear that the reasons to develop the land for new homes, new school, green public space and local people accessing homes. He stated that the capital programme was sustainable and they had long term plans to pay down existing debts.

i) Nelly Semaille of St. Mary's ward asked the following question of Councillor Stimson, Cabinet Member for Climate Action & Sustainability

What is the total value of revenue and capital grant funding from central government, included in the 2023/24 budget, for energy generation and efficiency projects in the Borough and, for comparison, please can she provide a quantitative list of any such grants received to date?

Written response: *In total, the Council has secured around £4 million of funding from Central Government to tackle energy efficiency and carbon emissions. These are for projects ranging from new low carbon heating systems in schools, feasibility work across the Council's estate as well as heat networks across the Borough and energy efficiency upgrades to residents homes.*

In terms of the next financial year, the Council has a number of funding applications in with Salix as part of the latest round of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding. We have already had confirmation that we have been successful in two of those applications, with funding of £1.02 million secured and we expect further good news over the coming weeks.

On behalf of Nelly Semaille the Mayor read out the supplementary question concluding whether you can confirm the uptake of the Sustainable Warmth Scheme in the Borough i.e. what percentage and amount of the funds available would actually be spent and what impact this would have on emissions?

Councillor Stimson replied that of that funding £232,000 had come from the Low Carbon Skills Fund and this was spent on a feasibility study into all of the Council's areas to see what next steps could be taken for the next stage and the Council had applied for the next stage of funding. A public sector decarbonisation scheme of £1.765million and that had been spent already on state schools for both upgrading lighting and heating. More than 100 homes had signed up via the scheme Solar Together and this scheme was being expanded across Berkshire. She explained this was the reason for putting the Climate Partnership in place so the Council could extend its the sphere of influence. She concluded that she had been involved in a net zero Berkshire hub which would see a further increase the Council's influence.

j) Tina Quadrino of Pinkneys Green ward asked the following question of Councillor Haseler, Cabinet Member for Planning, Parking, Highways & Transport

In 2021, the budget for flowers in planters across the Borough was withdrawn; this provided an estimated saving of £86,000. It is understood from Cllr Rayner's remarks at Cabinet that flowers will return to Ascot, Windsor and Maidenhead. In which case, what will the additional cost be and which service area budget will be funding this?

Written response: *The three main towns of Maidenhead, Windsor & Ascot are critical to the Council's economic growth. Providing a high-quality experience to our residents and visitors is essential, it supports repeat visits and builds confidence in our local retailers and business who trade in these areas. It has been recognised that there is a need for investment to bring key aspects of the towns up to a high standard, which will also help remove street clutter, renewal old planters with sustainable planting, clear 'Grot Spots' and improve signage and wayfinding around the towns.*

Tina Quadrino asked why this funding could not have been redirected to delivering the Council's environmental climate strategy commitments and providing a better future for generations?

Councillor Haseler replied that the budget line related to a town centre face lift so he did not have specific figures about the funding on flowers.

k) Paul Hinton, Old Windsor ward asked the following question of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Growth & Opportunity

Despite receipt of an additional £3.5m in funding from central government, this budget relies on s106 payments to meet its commitments to the environment, climate change, and the Climate Partnership. Please explain why this is necessary, and what your response is to those who believe that you are putting this council's environment and climate change commitments up for sale?

Written response: *The Council has faced difficult decisions over the budget, with very difficult savings put forward in many areas of the Council's statutory responsibilities. I am therefore pleased to have been able to maintain funding to the Climate Partnership. A partnership we created with the purpose of leveraging in private funding to help us deliver upon our climate commitments. The use of s106 has been utilised to enable us to also invest in other key areas such as tackling crime through investing in more police officers, and in clamping down on environmental crime, plus removing a number of savings proposed across adult social care and children's services.*

Paul Hinton asked whether the Leader and the rest of the Council would reject the proposed budget in favour of one where savings currently achieved from Section 106 payments are instead come from additional £3.5million central government funding?

Councillor Johnson replied that this administration had invested in the Climate Change Partnership. He advised that the additional central government funding had been allocated. The Climate Change Partnership was fully funded, and its objective was to secure additional private funding to deliver its objectives.

l) Mark Loader of Oldfield ward asked the following question of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Growth & Opportunity

With higher interest rates on borrowing "an increasing share of the Council's budget is required to service debt before money can be spent on day-to-day services". Budgeted at around £7m for 23/24.

Please can you explain how it has arisen that the debt on which this interest is paid, in excess of £200 million, is so high?

Written response: *The Council inherited historic debt from the old Berkshire County Council. In addition it has borrowed money to finance its capital programmes over the last 25 years, financing vital public facilities such as Braywick Leisure Centre. However, as you can see from the capital cashflow included within the budget papers (Appendix 4 Annex D p203), the Council is on course to pay off most of its debt over the next 12 years.*

Mark Loader surmised that the low level of Council tax across the borough resulted in a loss of revenue that could have been used to pay down debt and asked wasn't that the reason for the high level of debt?

Councillor Johnson replied that no this was not due to low levels of Council tax and although the Council had significant levels of borrowing it had invested in infrastructure funding to support the Council's growth.

m) Mark Loader of Oldfield ward asked the following question of Councillor Stimson, Cabinet Member for Climate Action & Sustainability

Please can you clarify what is the 23/24 budget for the Sustainability and Climate change team and the Climate partnership team. What are their deliverables (where documented) and are they constrained by the available budget. Who is responsible for ensuring residents get value for money ?

Written response: *The Sustainability & Climate Change Team are responsible for the delivery of the Environment & Climate Strategy. The strategy includes action plans across its key themes which detail the deliverables of the team. The Climate Partnership was set up by the Council as an independent body to engage broadly across the Borough to enable the scale of change required to deliver the carbon reduction targets set out in the Environment and Climate Strategy. As Lead Member, my responsibility is to ensure residents get best value. I meet with Officers at least bi-weekly to ensure I am happy with the work being undertaken and the value the team are delivering. I am absolutely satisfied the team are delivering against the objectives set out and have the resources they require.*

Mark Loader asked if the action plans and deliverables of the Sustainability & Climate Change Team and the Climate Partnership could be shared publicly.

Councillor Stimson replied that action plans and deliverables of the Sustainability & Climate Change Team were documented and as it comes to the anniversary of the first year of the Climate Partnership such information would be made available. She confirmed to report the request back to the Climate Partnership.

n) Sian Martin of Belmont ward asked the following question of Councillor Carroll, Deputy Chairman of Cabinet & Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health, & Transformation

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (Appendix 1, Annex A) identifies budget gaps for the four years from 2024/25 to 2027/28 totalling £10.2m. Given this administration's earlier draft 2023/24 budget included cuts to the Early Help provision, can the Lead Member confirm that, if he were to continue in post, this service would be protected from cuts in those years?

Written response: *Thank you for your question. I am very pleased that the additional funding received from government has enabled us to protect the early help provision in the coming year. I remain committed to funding the services which protect the most vulnerable and provide prevention services as far as we are able within the resources available to us. Should*

the electorate continue to put their faith in us and I retain this post in future years I will maintain my focus on ensuring the children of the borough are supported by high quality, good value services, with protection for those most in need, within a financially stable budget for the overall council.

Sian Martin asked for a guarantee that these services would be protected or was he ready to hand that pledge over to someone else?

Councillor Johnson confirmed the Council would continue to prioritise these services. He stated that the opposition had not yet indicated their budget and spending plans.

o) Will Scawn of Belmont ward asked the following question of Councillor Cannon, Cabinet Member for Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime, and Public Protection

I am delighted this Conservative-led Council is so committed to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour, and is funding four extra police officers to help keep local residents safe, and feeling safe.

Could policing the many, important footpaths in my home ward of Belmont be included in the remit of these extra police officers?

Written response: The four extra police officers will be dedicated to tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in the Royal Borough and are proposed to be recruited to support community safety and enhance local partnership working between the council and police. They will address key local crime issues and anti-social behaviour affecting communities and the environment. The officers will enhance our partnership working at a local level and focus more strongly on tackling local crime and anti-social behaviour issues at a community level. If issues are reported and raised in Belmont Ward then these will be addressed along with other competing priorities.

Will Scawn asked that local residents were involved in the partnership approach so that local knowledge can feed into decision making and they could be updated on next steps.

Councillor Cannon replied that local residents would be consulted in directing resources towards crime, environmental crime and antisocial behaviour. 17 March a Policing summit was being held to engage with residents, businesses and local communities to understand their priorities which would be the start of an ongoing consultation.

131. PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted.

132. 2023/24 BUDGET

The Council considered the referral from Cabinet for the financial plans for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and its Net Budget Requirement and associated Council Tax level for 2023/24. Appended to the report were the various elements that form the basis of the budget.

Councillor Hilton presented the budget to the meeting and thanked officers across the council for the way they had worked collaboratively with their respective Cabinet Members and particularly thanked the Finance Team. He reflected that this was his fourth budget of which some had been set in some of the most challenging circumstances, from the impacts of the COVID pandemic, which left financial difficulties, to more recently high inflation and fuel costs. He highlighted that the Council was planning to add a minimum of £1 million to reserves and have the prospect of delivering an unprecedented fourth year of budget underspends.

He stated that the budget invested in residents' priorities and delivered on the Corporate Plan continuing the transformation and modernisation programme which ensured the sustainability of crucial frontline services; exploited the power of technology and latest expert thinking as well as putting the needs of residents at the heart of everything the Council did to create a community-focussed and data-driven organisation.

He highlighted the Adult and Children's Social Care teams for their work with the borough's most vulnerable residents. As part of the Frimley ICS the Royal Borough had a productive partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group and other health partners including GPs. Working with them all, the Adult Social Care team was creating a seamless service between health and social care. This would increase the capability of reablement support services to allow individuals to remain in their homes and in their community for longer. To secure longer independence the Council planned training partnerships with families, care providers, health partners and the wider community. He stated that the budget committed £41 million to the Adults & Housing Directorate.

He added that the proposed budget would invest £28 million to maintain support for the borough's children and young people. Family Hubs were retained and the Council would recruit additional foster carers with an enhanced benefits package to improve recruitment and retention. The Council would invest in an Intensive Support Team to transform the support provided to children and young people on the edge of care; whilst they were in care and supporting them to leave care. This initiative would reduce the number of children requiring longer term more costly interventions.

He explained the Council was investing in new systems that would improve the management and quality of the services,

- £1.1M in a children's social care system
- £1M in a new Adult Social Care system which would enable the Council to implement care charging reforms.

Tackling climate change was a key priority for the Council and this was being addressed at multiple levels. The borough's recycling rates were above 51.5% and rising, CO2 emissions from the Council's buildings were on track to meet net zero by 2050 but understanding the Council could only do so much it had promoted the Climate Partnership. The Partnership was establishing projects to meet their vision that everyone will benefit equitably from cleaner air and water; affordable, renewable energy; greater biodiversity; and efficient, resilient infrastructure.

He continued that providing a high-quality experience to the borough's residents and visitors in Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot was essential to drive economic growth, support repeat visits and build confidence in local retailers and businesses, an investment of £150K would therefore be made to improve the borough's town centres.

He explained it was proposed that £500K of additional funding would be used to enhance the local environment by creating a new environmental crime enforcement unit, more funding to tackle fly-tipping, investing in additional street cleaning and tackling grot-spots.

He stated that the Council would continue to deliver a fairer deal for parking, free parking on Sundays would be retained in Maidenhead and resident parking discounts would be extended to include one-hour free parking in Victoria Street and Hines Meadow car parks and the cost of on-street parking permits would be frozen.

He stated that the Council would tackle crime and anti-social behaviour by funding four extra neighbourhood police constables dedicated to the borough. He added that this strengthened the Council's strategic partnership with the Thames Valley Police.

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He reflected that the budget that drove investments in the future of the borough and supported local economic recovery through its capital programme; the Vicus Way Car Park, delivered within budget, was now operational. Regrettably, redevelopment of the Nicholsons Centre which was key to the regeneration of Maidenhead and would transform an outdated shopping centre into a vibrant, mixed-use quarter, had been paused but the Council would challenge the Compulsory Purchase Order decision.

He advised that with Joint Venture partners, the Council was creating a ladder of housing opportunity. The first phase of the Watermark development was complete and construction at St Clouds Way was about to start and together these schemes would deliver 580 new homes with 156 affordable homes.

The adoption of the South West Maidenhead Development Framework SPD confirmed the provision of up to 2,600 homes including 30% affordable housing, supported by high quality infrastructure including primary and secondary schools, a local centre; new and enhanced green public open spaces, community and health facilities. He concluded the area a great place to live.

The Princes Foundation Trust was commissioned to develop a Windsor Vision to set out what the next 20 years might look like. Following Engagement with many stakeholders, the Trust will Publish an Engagement & Vision Report that details key actions that would support growth in the Windsor economy and revitalise Windsor Town Centre and its historic environment.

He continued that work to turn a review of Ascot High Street into a deliverable project with enhanced public realm continued alongside an essential placemaking SPD that would guide consideration of the first development proposals for the Ascot rejuvenation project.

He advised that the Council was seeking tenders for the management of its excellent leisure centres.

He stated the Council were committed to working with the Environment Agency to identify and progress affordable and deliverable flood alleviation schemes that would protect residents' homes from flooding in Datchet and Wraybury.

He explained that the Council were proposing a lower than inflation Council Tax increase of 2.99% together with a 2% Adult Social Care Precept, which at band D equates to £1.11 a week. He stated that the Council still had the lowest Council tax outside of London and at Band D would charge between £300 and £700 less than local authority neighbours which would be helpful to residents in difficult times.

He stated that the Council had taken the difficult decisions, consistently delivered underspends on the revenue budget, increased reserves which would be double what they were five years ago, close to the optimum level, and put the council's finances on a sustainable footing. He summarised the administration's significant achievements as having changed the corporate culture, created a Corporate Plan that sets out the vision for the Council, established the Climate Partnership, the Citizens portal improved transparency, strong strategic partnerships had been built with Health and the Police and the Council were leading on a Berkshire Wide Business improvement programme. He commended the budget to the meeting.

Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council seconded the recommendations as set out in the report. He commented that over the past four years Councillor Hilton had griped the Council's finances with a strong and firm direction, given the Council clarity and four years of underspending, doubled reserves and key investments. He stated that the Council had a plan: to keep Council tax low during the cost of living crisis; introducing a ring fenced post to target support to protect the most vulnerable and cracking down on crime by directly funding four additional police officers. He responded to comments that the posts were not necessary that it

was a big issue and residents wanted to see more 'Bobbies on the Beat'. He continued that the Council was also spending more on the borough's road to fix potholes, clean gullies and improve traffic flow and safety. Freezing car parking costs and extending the innovative residents discount scheme including free electric vehicle parking. Investments would be made in the additional air quality monitoring stations. Driving up standards across the private rental sector, supporting planning department to engage better with residents. He stated that the Council was committed to improving biodiversity and reducing carbon emissions. In advance of the election, he challenged the opposition to set out their budget proposals. He concluded by reiterating the Council's commitment to delivering a borough of opportunity – delivering core services but also driving investments, increasing productivity, tackling inequality and the borough playing their part to deliver sustainable economic growth, increasing education skills and health outcomes. He stated that the proceeds of growth locally would fund the service of the future, the mitigation against climate change, an increase in health provision, education provision and jobs for the future generation as well as deliver funding for affordable housing. He hoped consensus could be reached to support the proposed pay increase for Council staff.

Councillor L Jones delivered the opposition's response to the proposed budget and commenced by thanking the officers for producing the budget for 2023/24. She acknowledged that there were various options to provide a balanced budget but considered the policy decisions made by Cabinet during the last 12 years were still negatively impacting today. She noted that the proposed budget included savings off the annual council spend equating to a 10% reduction after accounting for increase in demand.

Councillor L Jones reflected that since 2012 she was not aware of the Conservative administration publicly acknowledging or responding within the budget papers, to any recommendation from the scrutiny panels or accepting any proposed amendments. She stated that this reflected the attitude of consecutive conservative administrations. Unless you take notice and work with scrutiny then it is just a 'tick box' exercise.

She reflected that when challenged in 2019 the lead member had stated that the Council would be 'debt free, including the pension deficit, in the medium term future' however the cashflow forecast explains that the debt would continue until 2034/35 with estimated borrowing costs for 2023/24 of over £9m which could not be spent on services. For 2024/25 this would increase to over £12m so over 11% of the total revenue budget of £108m. Councillor L Jones concluded that she was concerned that the Council was looking at continual non achievable savings plans.

Councillor L Jones summarised some of the conservative administrations promises for the four years following the 2019 budget: fund at least 25 community Wardens, noted the Council has six; build the Oaks Leisure Centre, noted whilst a priority was never included in the budget; support the development of the River Thames Scheme, this scheme went ahead without channel 1 because the Council was not being able to finance the required £50m contribution despite Cabinet stating they were 'committed to supporting the £640m Lower Thames Scheme that would protect residents homes' in the 2020 budget. Councillor L Jones continued that the promise to build hundreds of social rented homes in the four years to March 2023 had resulted in zero social rented homes built in 2019/20, 7 built in 2020/21, zero built in 2021/22 and then 15 built in 2022/23. She stated that the total of 22 social rented homes was far away from the amount promised in 2019.

Councillor L Jones considered that the Council was not doing enough to promote local use of the borough's town centres. She was encouraged to see the extension of discount parking to Victoria Street had been implemented and it was positive to see the promise to review residents discount parking charges but noted this had also been promised in 2020.

Councillor L Jones had observed reductions in the Council's experienced officers to enable cuts to council tax and felt this meant that service standards had slipped and it was costing residents more for less services.

The decision to outsource services without retaining the officers to monitor the contract and ensure standards of service had led to a reduction in the standard of service received by residents. She stated that entering into contracts without measurable outcomes because of the lack of officers with procurement or contract management skills had meant these contracts were flawed, with glaring omissions and had cost the Council thousands.

Councillor L Jones highlighted a few of the budget savings to emphasise the extent of cuts that had been proposed:

- PLA07S – review of parking enforcement cut of 11k which was the removal of school crossing patrollers at two schools. The crossing patrollers were there due to special circumstances at the sites and she queried the price of children's safety.
- CHI20S – Family Hub services which was the removal of targeted group work from anyone other than those with access to a social worker, this was reducing access to help.
- CHI21S – Reduction in Family support workers was reducing the offer to vulnerable children and she reiterated this was reducing access to help.
- AHH23S – Reduce scale of services to carers.
- Councillor L Jones explained that they had seen a reduction in the funding from revenue to the Climate Partnership. She stated that they had been told that this would be replaced by developer funds. She found this concerning as developer funding should be addressing the issues identified from the development. It still appeared to be a reduction in funding for one of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities.

Councillor L Jones stated that there were 229 mention of 'reviews' in this budget but all of these reviews would 'apparently' result in less money being spent, less officers employed or a reduction in service.

She continued that there had been changes since the draft budget due to additional funding from Central Government, one of these is £240k for 4 warrant officers. She had not seen the evidence of need or the outcomes agreed, so could not comment on whether the proposal offered value for money. She reflected that only 9 out of the 357 responses to the budget consultation mentioned police visibility but this was enough for a £240k investment. In March 2018 Cabinet committed to increasing the wardens to 25, when imposing the reduction to 19 Wardens (in 2020) the Lead member stated 'Assurance should be provided in the core aims of the Warden team remaining unchanged, namely to build cohesion and to provide a visible deterrent to crime'. She wondered if the promised 25 community wardens had been in place whether the Council would be considering this 240k investment.

Councillor L Jones advised that the change had not seen any scrutiny and members were not allowed to ask questions of Cabinet when the budget was on the agenda. She commented there had been no challenge, no scrutiny, no transparency and that this was in addition to earlier reductions in Library hours, Bin Collection, Day Centre services, Arts funding, Community programmes, Youth Services, Community Wardens, no money to replace diseased trees, increased charges for Parking permits, Green Waste, services to schools and reported issues across departments did not receive a response.

Councillor L Jones stated that the administration had ignored previous warnings about the expected demand on Social Care and Waste, the consequences officer redundancies and the loss of expertise and knowledge, that excessive borrowing without a cohesive repayment plan was opening up the council to extensive borrowing costs but reflected the warnings had been ignored.

Councillor L Jones concluded that the budget was the legacy of the last 16 years of a Conservative administration which had not respected challenge, had not been transparent and

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was political decision making. She stated that she did not support the policies that had shaped the budget and therefore could not support the budget presented.

Councillor W Da Costa commented that the Council had not underspent but had chosen to put money in reserves to return them to the minimum levels. He noted that the Clinical Commissioning Group had been replaced by Integrated Care Service. He reflected on the approach to climate change commenting that responding with a partnership was not committing or aligning to meet the Council's obligations. He asked if the administration could commit to no developer getting out of delivering 30% affordable housing through the viability clause. He commented that the Vision for Windsor was all about development and not about revitalising the town. He said the plan was to keep Council tax low and use Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funds to fund everything else. He asked whether this was taking capital funding into revenue. He thought there were lots of flaws in the budget, no collaboration but lots of cuts and promoting development.

The Mayor advised Councillor W Da Costa that he had one opportunity to speak and if he wanted to move an amendment to the budget that this was the opportunity.

Councillor W Da Costa thanked officers for their time in developing the proposals. He explained that based on the original budget, the Council had nearly £4m of windfall income plus £23m of developer contributions which could be used and more to come in the next financial year. He stated that residents had a need, and some had areas of acute need which should be addressed. He stated that many hundreds of residents on Wolf Lane, Poolmans Way, Priors Road, Keepers Farm Close, Washington Drive, on and off Foster Avenue, most of them elderly had become virtually housebound, unable to walk down a treacherous hillside pavement, unable to visit their local shops in Dedworth, struggling to visit friends, family or even access health services because of the change to the bus route.

The Mayor and the Monitoring Officer reminded Councillor W Da Costa that he had five minutes to speak in total including the movement of any proposed amendment to the budget.

Councillor W Da Costa continued that he proposed re-routing of the No.16 Bus to return to the route include Foster Avenue and Wolf Lane. He proposed that the frequency be improved and reliability be increased by including extra bus services. He wanted to introduce a night bus service from Windsor to bring back Dedworth residents after an evening out at the theatre, a club, pubs and restaurants. He explained that this was because Windsor Town Centre had been affected by a drop in footfall due to covid and many other issues. He wanted to boost local businesses. He stated that the Council were failing adults and vulnerable people in our care.

Councillor W Da Costa set out the proposed amendment that:

Appendix 1 Revenue Budget

That Council considers amending Annex H for Windsor Bus Services to increase the funding by £450k, Adult Social Care funding to be increased by £175k which would be balanced by reducing the contributions to reserves by £625k.

Appendix 3 Capital Programme

That Council considers increasing the Capital programme, and if accepted then recalculating the detailed figures throughout appendix 3 and 4 to include the Dedworth pedestrian network, known as the Windsor Walkways at a cost of Year 1 £600,000, Year 2 £600,000 and Year 3 £692,000

This would be funded by additional borrowing and there would be an additional revenue cost of £37,050 per annum for 50 years or one year borrowing of £600k. This

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would rise to £117,304 per year by year three which would be balanced by reduced contributions to Reserves.

Councillor W Da Costa raised a point of order that he had understood he would have five minutes to present his amendment in addition to his response to the main budget. The Monitoring Officer clarified what was set out within standing orders.

Councillor C Da Costa seconded the amendment and focused her comments on the adult services part of the proposal. Whilst she agreed with the reduction in agency social workers as this was a poor use of money, she thought it important that vacancies were filled so that social workers could manage the current and ever-growing caseloads. She commented that recruitment and retention was currently very challenging and the Council could learn from neighbouring authorities using incentives to keep staff. Councillor C Da Costa detailed an example case relating to resident she referred to as Mr X who had contacted the support hub she ran during covid. Following his stroke the hub team had raised safeguarding issues and she was concerned it was not an isolated incident. She reflected that when social worker levels were below establishment they would not have the capacity to undertake home visits to monitor the standard of domiciliary care being provided. She has raised concerns about the frequency of home visits for vulnerable residents and the implications. She explained that the proposal was for an increase in retention bonuses to ensure that the Council had sufficient social workers in post to provide these welfare checks, spot checks and to audit the contractors.

In response to Councillor Johnson's query about whether speaker's had requested to speak on the substantive motion or the amendment the list was cleared and councillors were invited to indicate if they wanted to speak to the amendment.

Councillor Werner queried how the proposed amendment was going to be funded and could not support additional borrowing as he had seen the level of debt increase from 50m to 220m in the previous four years. He reflected that every pound of interest came out of services to residents and he wanted to end the lack of restraint. He commented that in future when an evidence-based approach would be used to identify problems and financial solutions found to fund the proposal. This would then undergo a challenge session via scrutiny for inclusion in the budget. He wanted to change to a collegiate process and stop the additional borrowing of funds following the election.

Councillor Coppinger objected to the comments that had been made about officers not doing what they should, stated that no concerns had been raised with him as the relevant Cabinet Member and there was no evidence that this had occurred. He would therefore no support the amendment.

Councillor Clark was struggling to understand the issues and proposals being set out in the amendment. He noted that in relation to bus services the Council did not operate services but influenced providers and officers identified and proposed services based on need. He commented that there are complaints procedures in place for raising care provision concerns. He could not see where the revisions delivered services. He was keen to hear in relation to delivery of priorities which had a financial implication for residents where the funding would come from. He hoped the debate would clarify the amendment so that he could determine whether to support the amendment proposal.

Councillor C Da Costa provided a point of personal explanation in response to Councillor Coppinger that she had reported the whole case to the Head of People Services at the time it took place, was given the response regarding processes and would welcome a discussion on the issue outside of the meeting.

Councillor Johnson was unable to support the amendment but wanted to give the Councillors the credit for trying to put forward an amendment, the time and effort they had put into the

proposal. He supported the principle of increasing connectivity for elderly residents but was not able to support the idea of reducing the amount of monies entering reserves. He did not support increasing the capital programme and noted that the use of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding may not be feasible for the council's priorities and therefore may not be used for this purpose. He could not support an amendment that he had concerns about and he would not support something which generally channelled funding into one ward, the ward which the proposer represented. He appreciated the clarification from Liberal Democrat colleagues that they would reduce the Council's debt which he inferred supported the development plans for the golf course. He commented that assets would need to be reviewed to release funding to facilitate debt reduction.

Councillor Haseler commented that after covid that bus services had financial challenges and the Council provided a cash injection was provided to keep services going for local residents. He commented that waiting until the budget meeting to spring these proposals on Council was not the way to approach this. He suggested that Councillor W Da Costa should take his proposals to the Transport Team and together with himself, as portfolio holder, review the bus services as part of the review currently being undertaken. He added that Thames Valley Buses, as provider of services to that area, would also need to be consulted and part of the discussion to determine if it is a commercial or a subsidised route. He could not support the amendment for that reason.

Councillor L Jones agreed that due to processes Councillor W Da Costa had not been able to describe the full basis for his proposal. She added that it was not possible to fully articulate alternative proposals in five minutes and should be a cross-party process.

Councillor Walters advised the meeting that he had been discussing with Thames Valley Buses improvements to the bus routes 16 and 60A in the village of Hollyport where the older people were being affected by changes and the management were reviewing this for April.

Councillor Hilton replied to the amendment by saying that he although he respected the Councillor for preparing a proposal and he would have been available to discuss and provide advice to them. He reflected that in response to concerns about low reserves the administration had worked to increase them. He explained that in every Finance management report the Section 151 officer highlighted this as a risk and explained that this was why he was unable to support the revenue proposals. In relation to the Capital proposals he highlighted that the Capital Strategy showed that the Council was supporting fully funded schemes, revenue generating schemes and essential schemes. He commented that the proposal presented in the amendment did not fall within that criteria. He advised that the officer capital review board could consider the proposal to be prioritised for future consideration. He was unable to support the capital suggestions.

Councillor W Da Costa asked colleagues to support the amendment proposed as there was a need in Windsor following a decade of underfunding in Windsor in terms of pavements. Responding to comments made in the debate he acknowledged the concerns about additional borrowing and explained they had tried to fund the proposal from Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy funding but there was a high level of obscurity about how this could be allocated. They had therefore been forced to propose increased borrowing, but the intention was for this to be replaced by money from those sources. He added that they had been speaking to officers for six weeks and the Adult Social Care figures were from them. He wanted to boost the local economy as well as getting people out and about and improve accessibility for those affected by the change. He reflected that bus services were unreliable which had led to the proposal for increases to service frequency. He stated that officers were providing the figures required for retention of social care staff. He referred to the Walkways stating that improvements were required to open up the area for residents. He reiterated that there would still be funding to be added to reserves. He did not agree that the proposals were focused solely on his ward but the whole of Windsor. He concluded that they had been

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discussing proposals and detailed figures for six weeks with officers so it was not a last minute proposal.

A named vote was taken.

2023/24 Budget (Amendment)	
Councillor John Story	Against
Councillor Gary Muir	Against
Councillor Clive Baskerville	Abstain
Councillor Christine Bateson	Against
Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra	Against
Councillor Simon Bond	Abstain
Councillor Mandy Brar	Abstain
Councillor Catherine del Campo	Abstain
Councillor David Cannon	Against
Councillor Gerry Clark	Against
Councillor David Coppinger	Against
Councillor Carole Da Costa	For
Councillor Wisdom Da Costa	For
Councillor Jon Davey	Abstain
Councillor Karen Davies	Abstain
Councillor Phil Haseler	Against
Councillor David Hilton	Against
Councillor Maureen Hunt	Against
Councillor Andrew Johnson	Against
Councillor Greg Jones	Against
Councillor Lynne Jones	Abstain
Councillor Neil Knowles	Abstain
Councillor Ewan Larcombe	For
Councillor Sayonara Luxton	Against
Councillor Ross McWilliams	Against
Councillor Samantha Rayner	Against
Councillor Joshua Reynolds	Abstain
Councillor Julian Sharpe	Against
Councillor Shamsul Shelim	Against
Councillor Gurch Singh	Abstain
Councillor Donna Stimson	Against
Councillor Chris Targowski	Against
Councillor Amy Tisi	Abstain
Councillor Leo Walters	Against
Councillor Simon Werner	Abstain
Rejected	

The motion therefore fell. The debate returned to the substantive motion.

Councillor Werner commented on the approach to budgeting over the previous four years and noted that Councillor Haseler agreed that submitting amendments during the meeting was not the right approach. He stated that the budget was based on flawed approach of cuts and borrowing indicating that his party would approach things differently. He reported that they would begin by insourcing services to save money and improve services, an invest to save policy to make assets revenue raising rather than selling them, charging Community Infrastructure Levy across the whole borough, commercialisation of services, reinstating a bid making team to apply for available funding and improving contract management. He concluded that avoiding mistakes such as building commuter car parking during the pandemic, selling off the Magnet Centre too cheaply, paying waste contractor for fewer collections were simple things that could have been avoided. He stated that residents had raised concerns

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about borrowing and he reiterated that the increase from the stable level of £50m of debt to £220m within the last four years. He was shocked by the response to the question from Julian Tisi as their research had shown that capital receipts were overestimated by as much as £100m. He was concerned that if this was not factual what else within the report was fictional. He reflected on naming the budget over the years and concluded it would be known as the last Tory budget.

Councillor C Da Costa commented that she was pleased to see a change of heart following the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the removal of the cut to Family Hub work. Many families would benefit from this change. She supported the need for an officer to make grant bids because she noted that the Council had missed out on funding that was made available. She requested an explanation of the rationale for paying for four additional Thames Valley Police officers. She stated she was supportive of law enforcement, her son was a newly recruited officer and she was very proud of him and what the force did across the borough. Thames Valley Police had increased its recruitment from 200 to 1,000 officers within the year so queried why these roles were necessary and wondered if this funding would be better spent on community wardens to bring the funding back into the borough as enforcement was a borough issue.

Councillor Rayner explained to the meeting that the Council did have officers in post that continually bid for grant funding and the money brought into the Council supported services. She stated that comments made about the Princes Foundation were inaccurate as the £50k cost had come from Community Infrastructure Levy funding. She was proud to be Deputy Leader bringing forward the strong budget including: a 4% increase of staff salaries with 3% next year as officers deserved to be rewarded for their hard work; the investment in four extra police constables would improve residents safety and have a significant impact on Windsor and Eton as they are the busiest towns for tourism and the evening economy; investing in improving air quality with £1.5m towards cycling and walking would make a significant contribution; improving street cleaning, tackling grot spots and funding improvements such as flower displays to create a more welcoming environment; continuing to support culture and heritage within the borough; investing £1.8m in the Council's ICT and how the Council does its business. She continued that the borough had a fantastic library service which was constantly praised both locally and nationally so was pleased the Council was continuing to support their work. She noted that the budget was guided and informed by the Council Plan which provided a governance structure and giving transparent direction to decision making. She thanked everyone who participated in the budget consultation and noted that 6,000 questions were raised and answered by the finance team. She gave thanks to Councillor Hilton for his work bringing the Council into the position where they were able to strengthen their reserves and for his years of service and dedication. She also thanked Adele Taylor, Section 151 Officer for delivering her final budget for the authority and had led the finance team into this position.

Councillor Story advised that meeting that on behalf of Councillor Carroll, who was unable to attend, he spoke strongly in favour of the budget. He stated that despite the pandemic, the energy crisis, the war in Ukraine and other events that had caused instability the administration had steered the Council through global fiscal turbulence. He considered that comments that the Council would not be able to produce a balanced budget were misplaced or misjudged. He was grateful to residents including the Youth Council for their contribution to the consultation. He acknowledged that the timing of government funding decisions made budget planning difficult. He considered that the final outcome was a significant improvement for residents. In Councillor Carroll's service area the budget contained significant investment to support the vulnerable such as Early Help Hub to improve outcomes for children, joint working for better integrated care and early intervention. He asked the Council to join him in thanking Kevin McDaniel, Executive Director – People for delivering services in the most challenging area, noting his professionalism, leadership, commitment and dedication.

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Councillor Coppinger reflected that when he previously held the portfolio the decision had been taken to move adult social care services into a company called Optalis which is jointly owned with Wokingham Borough Council. He commented that the Council spent more on adult social care services than any other service, now he had the portfolio again he could see it continued to provide an excellent service. The Council had a clear costed plan for delivery to respond to the pressures. The Council was working on a joint programme with the NHS called Home First with input from professionals from both teams to assess the best approach, with residents coming first and real benefits were already being seen for residents.

Councillor Cannon was very supportive of the budget and the work done by officers and colleagues to produce a balanced budget investing limited resources to address residents' concerns. The Council continued to provide £10m to the Environment Agency for their responsibilities maintaining the flood waters of the River Thames, managing and improving local waterways and infrastructure to protect the borough's communities until an affordable and deliverable scheme was developed. Investment in air quality monitoring across the borough. Investing in four additional police officers and will increase the neighbourhood team by 50%. He stated that the four full-time officers were over and above those the Thames Valley Police could normally provide due to fixed establishment. The new officers would be ring-fenced to work within the borough to address key issues, alongside the new borough environmental crime team proposed within the budget, addressing priorities within the Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2022-25. A borough Community Safety, Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Summit was being held on 17 March to help identify which local policing issues would be their initial priorities. He explained the issues that warranted police officers could deal with.

Councillor Larcombe commented that Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury was a forgotten outpost of the borough. There were a couple of hundred houses within the M25 with the M25 and A30 cutting off a large section of Wraysbury. The area had the aeroplane noise, three working gravel pits, waste handling plant with lorry movements and a further temporary site had been given permanent status. He added that the area also floods. He commented that he had heard at the Cabinet meeting that the proposed Sunday parking charges had been removed for Maidenhead and asked whether this had also been removed for Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury residents? He considered this would be an election issue. He reported that more than 50 people had attended a meeting in Wraysbury about flooding with the Environment Agency attending and the borough officer was there. He believed the budget would be approved but noted that at Appendix 3 the report referred to the River Thames Infrastructure Project which was initiated in 2003 emerging from the Environment Agency strategy. He queried the reference to the cost of the scheme being £10m in 2015 reflecting he had been present when Surrey County Council had committed to funding the elements within Surrey. It had then been reported that all elements of the scheme was fully funded but something went wrong. He could not get any answers until August 2020 it was stated at a Parish Council meeting that the scheme was unaffordable and Channel One had been removed. Wraysbury had not had any flood improvements since 2003. This Council did not put a penny into the scheme and he hoped to see a change in Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury.

The Mayor highlighted that the time had past 9.30pm and asked members to agree to conclude the business on the agenda.

Councillor C Da Costa requested that this could be reviewed again at 11pm.

The meeting agreed to a comfort break and was adjourned. The meeting recommenced at 21:46.

Councillor Bond commented on two of the budget lines. His experience of Community Wardens and neighbourhood policeman started in 2010 and he remembered that he was impressed of their knowledge of the area and the people in it which was helpful in dealing with antisocial behaviour. He had seen the effect of austerity reducing the number of wardens from

the original Conservative promise of 36 to just 6 and police officer numbers had fallen nationally with still fewer now than there had been in 2010 and down by 9% as a proportion of the population. He considered himself as an advocate for improving security for everyone. He was disappointed by the proposed cuts to the revenue budget for supporting the Climate Partnership made up with money already committed for climate change and biodiversity. He commented that people were starting to make connections and making changes themselves as individuals but the Council needed to do more. The additional government funding was a missed opportunity to put this right.

Councillor Davies reflected on the budget that the proposal that £100k of the £250k budgeted for supporting the Climate Partnership would be taken from Community Infrastructure Levy funds earmarked for carbon offsetting and biodiversity net gain caused by development. She stated that this was a £100k reduction in the budget. In relation to air quality monitoring she was very pleased to see that monitoring of particulates was finally being extended across the borough but was bemused to see this announced a year after the original proposals were voted down. She was disappointed the proposal was for three rather than four additional monitoring stations so one of the identified areas would continue to be unmonitored. As a part of the overview and scrutiny process she reflected they had the opportunity to comment on the impact of services but had not been able to comment on the proposals impact on the Council's journey towards net zero. An annual sustainability budget panel was proposed to be held once a year to do that.

Councillor Del Campo commented that it was her fourth budget meeting and reflected on previous discussions. In 2020 she talked about the value of the borough's Children Centres as cuts for all but the neediest families were proposed under the guise of transformation. Wider benefits for not just the most vulnerable but for those families who were hovering above that category. In 2021 transformation threatened the borough's libraries and talked about how they offered so much more than books, how important it was to protect community spaces and noted the hard work to save and improve them. In 2022 she had pointed out the number of community initiatives that had been closed due to them not turning profit. Now in 2023 the settlement had allowed the Cabinet to reverse some of the hardest proposed cuts. She commented that the Overview and Scrutiny process had allowed her and her colleagues the opportunity to ask, on the record, the impact of those savings on services and people's lives. She appreciated the support from the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the recommendations to Cabinet for Children's Services and maintaining the free Meals on Wheels service. She stated that a Liberal Democrat administration would continue to protect this funding. She could not understand why the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel had been prevented for making similar recommendations to prevent a budget cut reducing the safety of the route to school for children in the borough. She stated that this was counter to previous promises. This cut would be reversed by a Liberal Democrat administration. She was concerned about the care in the community proposals stating there was a danger that without the right care and support people in their homes could be isolated. She had pushed for a Domestic Violence Task and Finish Group to ensure that residents' lived experience matched the theory and rhetoric, she was not sure this was the case despite the sterling work of officers. She concluded that it was time for change after 16 years of Conservative administration.

Councillor Brar commented that at paragraph 2.4.5 on page 131 it stated that the Environment Agency Scheme would receive £805K in funding in 2023/24 and 2024/25 with works to begin in 2027 with money to be drawn from £10m set aside in April 2015. She asked what had taken so long, the affected residents had been crying out for action only now was this announcement made just before an election. She commented that Community Infrastructure Levy receipts were meant to be shared with the parish Council and used for Neighbourhood Plans etc and would be shocked to learn if any money had been shared. As a Bisham Parish Councillor she was aware of how needed these funds are for projects for local residents.

Councillor Tisi advised that in preparation for the meeting she had looked back at previous Conservative pledges on Children's services and my shadow lead budget speeches for inspiration and was struck at the patterns that formed. She stated that in 2019 the Tory manifesto promised to 'Protect vulnerable residents' and in the 2020 budget the administration closed the borough's Children's centres but claimed they were transforming the service for the better rather than to just save money. By 2021 she was raising concerns that the burden of 90% of the cuts in that budget were unfairly shouldered by older residents, disabled residents and children with special educational needs. In 2022 she had argued that instead of the money wasted on 'bingate', they could have invested a fraction of that on family support worker to bring back universal services. At the start of this budget process she noted the Council was faced with hundreds of thousands of pounds of cuts to services that support young children and young people. Early help services wiped out, cuts to special educational needs support, measures to retain social workers, the youth offending team, the total decimation of the family hubs. All of this risks harmful cumulative effects on children and families though short term cuts. She stated that it was 'shameful' that the administration's first reflex when faced with difficult choices was to slash these recently 'transformed' services. She commented that the administration had quickly changed from what was set out in the corporate plan to focus on prevention in children services. She strongly believed in the value of early help services to keep families together and had advocated for them during the budget process and would continue to do so.

She reflected that she was relieved that the administration had finally listened to pressure from the public consultation, the interventions of People Overview and Scrutiny Panel and other representations to use some of the windfall government settlement to reverse the worst of the family hub cuts. She asked whether the administration had considered the enormous levels of stress caused to the affected staff by having redundancy threatened over Christmas and thanked the staff in children's services who continued delivering for the borough's families despite this additional pressure.

She wondered whether this would be revisited when further cuts were needed and commented that the administration could not be trusted. She stated that following the election as lead member for Children's Services she would prioritise early intervention, not just for the most vulnerable but also for those families who are 'just about managing'.

Councillor Davey asked the meeting whether the Council needed to call in Thames Valley Police's CID to determine best value. The Government suggests that local authorities follow best value approach to managing and delivering services. He stated that reviewing the Council Plan and Residents' Surveys would be a good starting point. He wanted to focus on two points that appeared in the final budget: £200K environment enforcement and £240k for Police Officers. He assumed that Cabinet included these lines based on data but thought they were a political invention and PR spin. Within the Corporate Plan the main strength was Communities and there was not much in there about crime but rather references to an increase in the proportion of women and girls feeling safe in the borough. Within the 2022 Residents' Survey references to crime and safety were positive. He stated that there were apparently 9 references in the budget consultation responses, found them hard to find and he quoted a few examples. Community Safety Survey 2022 had 26 comments that people did not feel safe and police were not visible. This small number of comments had been used to justify this expenditure in addition to the monies provided via precept. He thought that Thames Valley Police did a great job but did not feel this was how residents' money should be allocated. He could see no references to the rationale behind the need for the environment enforcement officers. He did not consider that these budget lines felt right. He asked the meeting to consider the funding being focused instead on Community Wardens instead. Providing community support and their role was to help reduce crime and disorder or the fear of crime working with all parts of the community. He reflected back on the CIFPA review of Council finances and whilst he was pleased to hear that there were additional checks through the audit process ensuring the Council had enough officers to ensure effective contract management. He reiterated that introducing these budget lines

without a sound basis was the work of political invention and PR spin. He concluded that with a new administration this would be a thing of the past.

Councillor Bhangra thanked the Leader, Councillor Hilton, Adele Taylor Section 151 Officer, Andrew Vallance Head of Finance, Chief Executive Tony Reeves and his Cabinet colleagues and officers for their hard work in preparing the budget in unprecedented times. He observed that the budget was presented during the cost-of-living crisis after a recent pandemic. He was pleased that each year during their term the administration had delivered a balanced budget with no overspending and appropriate levels of borrowing to deliver the commitments made to residents. He commented that there was no credible or costed alternative budget to be considered despite the lengthy consultation period and opportunities to consider the proposals. He stated that it was a residents' budget that keeps money in their pocket by balancing their priorities. He was pleased to see the creation of an environmental crime enforcement unit to tackle poor behaviour and fly tipping; invest in street clearing and tackle grot spots. Continuing weekly collection for food and waste recycling and increasing recycling levels. Continuing to invest in the borough's parks. He thanked the officers within his team. He was pleased to see continued funding and support for Norden Farm which was based in his ward, Boyn Hill and Old Court in Windsor.

Councillor Haseler thanked Councillor Hilton for bringing forward the balanced budget and was pleased that within his portfolio they were investing more in roads and pavements to fix potholes, clear blocked drains and improve traffic flow, street lighting and road safety. He advised that an application had been submitted to the Department for Transport to enforce a selection of moving traffic offenses. He stated that they were extending the residents parking scheme to Victoria Street and Hines Meadow car parks so 8 car parks were now included. Free parking would be offered in all Council car parks as long as a free Council EV permit was displayed. He supported the aforementioned environmental enforcement officers and the Thames Valley Police Officers. He reiterated the improvements being made to the town centres including improving signage and wayfinding. He highlighted the significant £454k investment in the tree team to cover proactive tree inspections and maintenance. He reported that the fully funded capital investments were: £250k for pavement maintenance including accessible crossing points; £1.2m pothole action fund that had been secured from the Department for Transport that could be used for potholes and resurfacing; £300k for highway drainage improvement schemes; £200k for road safety schemes and traffic calming schemes; £1.261m for highways resurfacing schemes; £200k for ongoing structural testing of streetlights; £600k for the refurbishment of the historic Cookham Bridge; £200k for the improvement to borough car parks; £100k for the review, replacement or upgrade of road markings on major roads, junctions or crossings; £130k to upgrade traffic signals; £150k for work on Drift Road; £500k for street lighting to complete the LED upgrade, light column replacements for damaged, misaligned or stumped assets; £200k towards Electric charge point rollout; £150k for improvements to Maidenhead Town Centre environment; £1.5m for walking and cycling schemes. He concluded by recommending the balanced budget and thanking all officers across all services for their professionalism and hard work over the previous year.

Councillor Singh stated that he had serious concerns for the budget and the process followed as its delivery would have serious implications for our residents, their families and friends. In a recent scrutiny session, he still had not received an answer to a query relating to a single budget line as it was stated this could include 100s of elements but specific detail was provided. He stated that vagaries of the budget question its credibility. He was concerned about the repayment of the debt due to the penalty clauses. He could not see any budget or contingency in place to the Broadway car park back into use which was a particular issue for his ward. He stated that this was not just an issue for St. Mary's but across the borough residents were having to go to other boroughs to do their shopping. The car park was partially closed since August and fully closed since November which was costing thousands of pounds on a daily basis. He had asked for a report and how this was being offset and this had not been provided. This was negatively impacting residents and businesses which he considered

should be supported. He considered that if not opened soon it would force other businesses to close and leave the town. Options that he had provided had been ignored for the last few years e.g bringing Clyde House car park into public use; Waldeck House had been run down and left to rot with no plans to develop, Kidwells Park café had been closed for nearly 5 years and that community asset could have been brought back into use and the loss of the sensory park which were important to his residents. He was worried about how the debt mountain would be resolved and asked again whether the Town Hall would be sold and stated he had not seen a report which he had requested in January 2022. The Community Asset Review was on hold until after the elections. He asked if the developments seen in Maidenhead would be repeated in Windsor.

Councillor Clark commented that he agreed that there should not be spin but considered he had been listening to it. He recalled his comments from the previous year was that 'we were all doomed' but the budget had been delivered on budget. Within the Residents' Survey not only the majority thought the Council offered value for money but it was 7% above the Local Government Association benchmark, 70% of residents saying they trusted in the Council; 66% of residents saying they were very or fairly satisfied much LGA below that and 89% were satisfied with RBWM as a place to live. He stated it was not the doom and gloom borough but we should be proud of achievements achieved delivered against pandemic and financial issues. He said that balancing the books, getting right level of borrowing so that progress was not thwarted was sensible fiscal management. He did not think that the Cabinet had an easy job, the money had to be found from somewhere and there was no credible answer of where the opposition would fund any of the expenses they'd outlined. There were 158 written answers shared before the budget came out which were used to help them object rather than to work with officers to make proposals. He concluded that if you don't support the budget then need to come forward with costed proposals to be credible. He concluded by commending the budget.

Councillor L Jones made a point of clarification that members questions to officers on the budget were confidential and therefore what Councillor Clark referred to could not have happened. He clarified in response that he was referring to questions and responses that were in the public domain.

Councillor Singh made a point of explanation that he was trying to explain that Council revenue was down, service levels were down and debt was rising.

Councillor Stimson commented that she was aware that the climate and sustainability budget had been under scrutiny for some time. She was extremely proud of the team that she worked with, the budget may be a small percentage of the overall figure, but she highlighted that it reached into many, if not all areas of the council and with the Climate Partnership with large multi nationals. She added that with officers trained in carbon literacy, there would be no limit to how this could grow. She reflected that it had expanded exponentially over the last 3.5 years. The team had grown from zero individuals to 10.6 at present. She wanted to correct an earlier speaker advising that only one of the individuals within the 10.6 was still doing the same job. There were six new officers, currently there were two vacancies being recruited to and they also had two ecologists who work closely with the team. The team were working with an individual in schools, and Recycling, parks and countryside. She thought the officers had done an extremely good job.

She reflected that the Section 106 which was actually a Carbon Tax had been created with the Head of Planning and was not just funding for the council but actually teaches developers to be more climate efficient, more carbon efficient and increase biodiversity with a carbon offset if the list was not met.

As a ward councillor for St Mary's she considered that many of her residents would welcome the extra funding coming forward to be spent on extra police, an environment crime enforcement that tackles poor behaviour towards the environment, and increased funding to

deal with flytipping and more street cleaning. She stated that these were key issues that are raised when talking to residents as building a safer community was also important in the context of serving that community.

She concluded that with a superb group of officers she had been using care, ingenuity and hard work to cultivate a solid climate portfolio and climate team but there was still more to be done.

Councillor Reynolds wanted to focus on parking as the advantage card was a fantastic addition to the borough and a fantastic Liberal Democrat success. He recalled it used to allow people to go into town to use the local shops, cafes and places to eat at a leisurely pace to enjoy the town. He compared that to the current hour of free parking which was not long enough time for residents to meet in places, to eat or spend their time. He added that residents in Windsor were being forced to pay a tourist tax to park in their own town. He commented that Vicus Way was empty despite low fees as no one wants to park there. He asked how much money had been spent on a car park that was not used or wanted by the residents. He observed that Nicholsons Car Park had been let to deteriorate to the point where concrete was falling off of it. He supported the proposal for four additional Police Officers if they were fully dedicated to Windsor and Maidenhead and spending all of their time in our towns. He commented that the administration had just woken up to this key issue, reflected on the history of them cutting Community Wardens which was a failure to live by their manifesto pledges. Looking forward to a Liberal Democrat administration would mean fighting climate change, clear plan to sort out dirty streets, sort finances and put the Council back into the heart of the community. He concluded that it was the last Conservative budget.

Councillor Walters asked what was there to dislike about the proposed budget with the lowest council tax level outside of Westminster which would mean more money in people's pockets. He added that to have four constables around that were dedicated to the borough would be excellent. Tackling fly tipping was important in the rural areas. Improving air quality was something he had led on in Bray as people were suffering from the congestion which was difficult to stop. The budget had been balanced and he wanted everyone to thank the officers and the Leader for achieving a balanced budget in the circumstances. 75 or 80% of the monies received from residents was spent on Adults and Children's Services and they were the most vulnerable residents. He commended the budget.

Councillor Knowles asked colleagues to note that though in opposition not all independent councillors were a different group of people and not all the same. In relation to Capital spending he could see that there was a lot of instances where things were refined down to what was possible for what funding was there. He was disappointed in the focus. He commented that the state of pavements and roads were not due to the Council's contractors but due to other utility companies but without someone monitoring what was going on that clause of 'make good' becomes 'patch up and walk away' which then requires remedial attention. He would have hoped that there would have been a push for emergency funding to undertake a survey of the other car parks that had been open for some time for example Victoria Street car park which was an embarrassment with horrendous conditions in the stairwell. He was aware that contractors were trying to clean it but the site needed major attention. He thought structural inspections would be implemented across the older car parks. An allocation of money to improve public toilets needed a boost as they were in a poor state. He was disappointed there was no mention of Oaks Leisure Centre, which some Councillors were strongly in favour of, there had been assurances that the money would be found or borrowed to finance the project and nothing was included. He observed the planning permission would start to expire again. Within the capital cashflow there had been a lot of slippage which was accounted for, however the Council had a lump in the next few years between a lag in the income and the expenditure required. He commented that the officers had done an brilliant job pulling the budget together and he knew that they would have modelled the bottom, middle and most optimist outcomes and it would be useful to have sight

of that along with detailed assumptions and detailed risk assessments. He concluded that he wanted to ensure that they made borrowing work.

Councillor McWilliams commented that over the past four years the administration had protected vital public services, invested in crucial infrastructure projects, implemented robust financial management to ensure the best value for taxpayers money and secured long term financial stability of the Council. He observed that whilst other Councils were dipping into reserves to avoid difficult decisions the Council was adding to its reserves and had a clear plan to pay down public debt crucially lowering debt. He stated that RBWM did not duck difficult decision making, not because it was popular or easy, but because it was the right thing to do. He stated that there was no such thing as public money but taxpayers money. He recalled that the last time the Liberal Democrats had run the council they increased council tax by over 24% in four year which meant residents paid more. This and the previous administration had cut that which meant that residents had £30m of their own money to spend on their own priorities. In response to growing demand and reduction in government grant this had been steadily increasing but at a lower rate. He compared the approach to examples of Liberal Democrat run Councils and the approach in Slough Borough Council. He stated that this Council's approach had enabled them to invest in four more police officers, expand the residents parking scheme, to open a state-of-the-art leisure centre and establishing an innovative Climate Partnership. He stated that the Liberal Democrats had funded a failed Judicial Review which was a failed attempt to stop the Local Plan from happening which sought specifically to increase the value of the Council's assets by delivering social housing and 1922 socially rented homes.

Councillor McWilliams stated that the Housing team, through rigorous service reform, effective delivery and achieving grant funding, had supported 93 residents through the rough sleeper pathway. 40 residents sleeping rough in 2019 and only 6 at the last count but the number fluctuates.

On the Leisure sites they were hoping to see the Windsor site expand soon, in relation to the Oaks Leisure Centre the Leisure Contract was currently undergoing the tender process so he didn't want to speculate but following the global pandemic the leisure industry had been affected. He concluded that he commended the budget.

Councillor Shelim said he was speaking in full support of the budget which would make the lives of his residents in Eton and Castle better. He commented that despite inflation keeping they were keeping the parking permit to £50 for the third year, they were not increasing visitor parking costs and electric vehicles continued to be able to park for free endorsing the commitment of tackling climate change. To help residents and many shops and businesses they were 'first hour free'. He added that £200k to improve the car parks was something he had been lobbying for which would be welcomed by residents and visitors. He advised that residents had been asking for more electric charging points to help them switch. In Windsor there was more limited off-street parking so investment of £200k was supporting the roll out of electric charging points. He concluded that they were doing things for our residents and make the borough a cleaner, safer and more attractive place to live and helping residents with the cost of living.

Councillor Sharpe began by thanking the officers for the work they had done over the last few years and in particular he thanked Adele Taylor and Andrew Vallance for their work on the budget. He considered this was the most closely scrutinised budget than ever produced. He was delighted by what had been achieved with the sustainability agenda and also what they were doing with the additional policing in place for residents' safety. He reflected that for the fourth year in a row the administration had produced a balanced budget and had a plan. He said unfortunately the opposition had an opportunity to prepare an alternative budget but had not done so. He stated that there was an amazing misunderstanding of the budget process and what it is all about and he was very disappointed. He continued that from what he had heard there was nothing there. He heard about insourcing and sharing resources with other

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councils, which was nothing new there but he stated it was great that they were onboard with our plans. He stated that would have loved an alternative plan and he had found the opposition to be uncoordinated and confusing.

Councillor L Jones noted a point of explanation that it was a misrepresentation of the budget setting process.

Councillor Hilton summed up the debate saying that the budget had been damned earlier because of the proposed £10.1m savings but no mention was made of the £10.5m growth funding being introduced. He stated that the budget was actually about reprioritising resources so that the Council can deliver to our residents' priorities. Savings were at risk of change due to a change in circumstances and this year £165k saving in home to school transport was blown away by the influx of asylum-seeking children and turned into an overspend. The good news was that they were prudent and had contingency to cover such eventualities. He understood the comments on Family Hubs and the desire to spend more but he wasn't sure if colleagues realised that, over the past four years, the proportion of budget spend on adults and children's care has risen from 69% to 75% and that clearly is unsustainable so small reduction in Family Hubs alongside an intensive support team to transform support for people on the edge of care which was specifically designed to prevent them going into a care setting. He thought there had been a number of interesting speculations on land values and the dislike of borrowing but he wondered how many people present at the meeting were debt free. He noted that most people have mortgages and if people wanted to borrow money to buy a car then they do and the Council borrowed money in the same way. The Council had borrowed money to refurbish York House, this was now let and was delivering a really good commercial return. The Council was obligated to produce places at school and had borrowed money to increase school capacity. He directed the members present to page 203 in the agenda pack to the section that explained how debt would be paid down. He said He had listened to the members opposite, he'd like to deliver those things but commented that it was easier to look at finance from the outside. He concluded that this was his last budget, and he left a legacy of transparent and open finance reports, consistent underspends, sustained reserves and finances. The excellent team would continue to work with Directors to improve further the Council's financial position. This could not be achieved without incredible support from the conservative administration. He stated that this was not just his legacy but that Adele Taylor, Section 151 Officer who was leaving to work in Slough. He urged everyone to support the budget as proposed.

A named vote was taken.

2023/24 Budget (Motion)	
Councillor John Story	For
Councillor Gary Muir	For
Councillor Clive Baskerville	Against
Councillor Christine Bateson	For
Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra	For
Councillor Simon Bond	Against
Councillor Mandy Brar	Against
Councillor Catherine del Campo	Against
Councillor David Cannon	For
Councillor Gerry Clark	For
Councillor David Coppinger	For
Councillor Carole Da Costa	Against
Councillor Wisdom Da Costa	Against
Councillor Jon Davey	Against
Councillor Karen Davies	Against
Councillor Phil Haseler	For
Councillor David Hilton	For

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Councillor Maureen Hunt	For
Councillor Andrew Johnson	For
Councillor Greg Jones	For
Councillor Lynne Jones	Against
Councillor Neil Knowles	Against
Councillor Ewan Larcombe	Against
Councillor Sayonara Luxton	For
Councillor Ross McWilliams	For
Councillor Samantha Rayner	For
Councillor Joshua Reynolds	Against
Councillor Julian Sharpe	For
Councillor Shamsul Shelim	For
Councillor Gurch Singh	Against
Councillor Donna Stimson	For
Councillor Chris Targowski	For
Councillor Amy Tisi	Against
Councillor Leo Walters	For
Councillor Simon Werner	Against
Carried	

RESOLVED that:

Appendix 1 – Revenue Budget

That Council considers and:

i) Approves the 2023/24 Net Budget of £108.075m, consisting of:

a. The proposed new growth in service budgets of £10.558m as set out in Annex C to Appendix 1;

b. The proposed new opportunities and savings of £10.923m as set out in Annex D to Appendix 1;

c. The associated contribution from Earmarked Reserves of £0.165m, and the level of contingency as £2.380m as set out in paragraph 5.29

ii) Approves the calculations for determining the Council Tax Requirement for 2023/24 as set out in Annex I1 to Appendix 1, consisting of:

a. A Council Tax Requirement of £87.222m.

b. A Band D charge of £1,223.11 for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in 2023/24, reflecting an overall increase of 4.99%, based on:

i. A 2.99% increase in base Council Tax taking the charge to £1,060.73 for 2023/24;

ii. An additional 2% to reflect an increase in the Adult Social Care Precept which is proposed as £162.38;

c. The Special Expenses Precept increases by £1.03 (2.98%) to £35.60 for 2023/24 for the unparished areas of Windsor and Maidenhead in accordance with Section 35 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as set out in Annex E to Appendix 1;

iii) Notes the following Precepts by partner organisations:

i. The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley - £256.28 (para 5.19), as set out in Annex I3 to Appendix 1;

ii. Royal Berkshire Fire Authority - £78.95 (para 5.19), as set out in Annex I3 to Appendix 1;

iii. Parish Precepts as set out in Annex I3 to Appendix 1, as notified by the individual parishes.

iv) Approves the allocation of the £152.201m Dedicated Schools Grant as set out in Annex F to Appendix 1, and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of People and the S151 officer in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and for Children's Services, Education, Health, Mental Health and Transformation to amend the total schools' budget to reflect the actual Dedicated Schools Grant levels once received;

v) Approves delegated authority to the Grants Panel to award community grants (capital and Kidwells Trust) for the 2023/24 annual round and publish the decisions following the Grants Panel.

Appendix 2 – Fees and Charges

That Council considers and approves:

- i) The Fees and Charges for 2023/24 as set out in Annex A to Appendix 2.
- ii) Delegated authority is extended to the Executive Director for People, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Maidenhead, to set the Direct Payments Standard Rate.

Appendix 3 – Capital

That Council considers and approves:

- i) The Capital Strategy 2023/24 – 2025/26 as set out in Annex A to Appendix 3 of this report. A draft was considered by Audit and Governance Committee on 20th October 2022.
- ii) The consolidated Capital Programme for 2022/23 – 2025/26 in Annex B1-3 to Appendix 3 of this report, including previously approved schemes and proposed new schemes as set out in Annexes B4 & B5 to Appendix 3 of this report.
- iii) Capital programme slippage to date from 2022/23 to 2023/24 as detailed in Annex B6 to Appendix 3.

Appendix 4 – Treasury Management

That Council considers and approves:

- i) The Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 4 of this report, including
 - a. The proposed Lending Counterparty Criteria;
 - b. the continuation of the current Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2023/24. A draft was considered by Audit and Governance Committee on 20th October 2022.
- ii) The Council's Treasury Management Policies as set out in Annex B to Appendix 4 of this report;
- iii) The Council's Prudential Indicators as set out in Annex C to Appendix 4 of this report

Appendix 5 – Pay Policy Statement

That Council considers and approves:

- i) The Council's updated Pay Policy Statement Strategy for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 5 of this report.

Appendix 6 – Proposed Pay Award

That Council considers and approves:

- i) Pay awards of 4% from 1 April 2023, and 3% from 1 April 2024, for all staff paid on RBWM local pay scales.
- ii) An increase in Members' Allowances of 4% from 1 April 2023, and 3% from 1 April 2024, in line with the employee pay award, as required by Section 17 of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Appendix 7 – Feedback from Public Consultation/Overview and Scrutiny Panels

That Council considers and has due regard to the contents of Appendix 7.

Appendix 8 – Equalities Impact Assessments

That Council considers and has due regard to the contents of Appendix 8.

The Mayor noted that the time had passed 11pm and asked members to agree to conclude the business on the agenda.

133. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Members considered the referral from Cabinet regarding the outcome of the consultation into the proposed amendments to the Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2023/24.

Councillor Hilton proposed the recommendations and explained that the Council was obligated in law to review its Council Tax reduction scheme annually. He advised that the review left the council tax reduction rate unchanged at 80% but proposed a number of changes designed to make life easier for CTR recipients and to reduce the Council's administrative burden.

Councillor Hilton explained that five proposed changes were proposed and that three of the five changes only affected working age applicants who were in receipt of both Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and Universal Credit (UC).

He briefly ran through the changes:

Currently anyone in receipt of both Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and Universal Credit (UC) who was working had their CTR altered every time their UC changed as a result of fluctuating changes in earnings. This could result in up to 13 changes per year which was confusing for customers. The proposal was to only re-assess these claims three times per year, unless a customer had a significant change such as starting or stopping work. When re-assessed, all changes would be processed so the overall net financial effect would be the same. This would make things a lot easier for all parties.

The Universal Credit Customers – automatic re-awards proposal would mean that any UC customer who lost entitlement as a consequence of a slightly higher level of income for one UC assessment period of four weeks, would not need to submit a new claim for CTR if they subsequently re-qualified. He stated this would neither increase nor decrease the level of CTR for customers but would make life easier for customers.

Currently, if a UC customer has a deduction from their UC income as a consequence of repaying a loan to the Department of Work and Pensions, the net UC income was taken into account when assessing entitlement to CTR. This was at variance with other Benefit Income where regulations require the gross income to be used. The proposal was to amend the scheme to equalise the treatment of UC customers by taking their gross award. He stated that this would not be beneficial to these UC customers who are repaying a loan as they would get less CTR but would be fair.

Councillor Hilton explained that the current system limited the time that working age customers may be able to have their new claim backdated to one month but they need to have proven good cause for failing to have applied earlier. It was proposed to extend that current one-month period to three months where the customer has proven good cause for failing to apply at an earlier date. This brought working age customers in line with pensioners who receive CTR. He stated that this would be beneficial to customers.

The final proposal was to ensure the scheme aligned to changes introduced to the national Housing Benefit scheme, where the rules were set by the Department of Work and Pensions

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or the Pension Age Council Tax Regulations which were amended by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities. He stated that this would be largely beneficial to all customers and was what the Council had done since the scheme was introduced.

Councillor Hilton emphasised that the Council was not proposing to change the level of reduction which remained at 8%.

Councillor Hilton reported that the agenda report explained the extensive public consultation exercise which had been undertaken from 2 September to 2 December 2022. He stated that in total 499 responses had been received. There was strong support for the changes which varied between 77% and 86% of respondents. He concluded that he hoped that the Council could support the recommendations.

Councillor Johnson seconded the proposals supporting Councillor Hilton's comments.

Councillor C Da Costa welcomed the changes and commented they would make life much easier for those families in receipt of these benefits.

On the proposition of Councillor Hilton, Cabinet Member for Asset Management & Commercialisation, Finance, & Ascot and seconded by Councillor Johnson the recommendations were put to a named vote as required by the legislation.

Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Resolution)	
Councillor John Story	For
Councillor Gary Muir	For
Councillor Clive Baskerville	For
Councillor Christine Bateson	For
Councillor Gurpreet Bhangra	For
Councillor Simon Bond	For
Councillor Mandy Brar	For
Councillor Catherine del Campo	For
Councillor David Cannon	For
Councillor Gerry Clark	For
Councillor David Coppinger	For
Councillor Carole Da Costa	For
Councillor Wisdom Da Costa	For
Councillor Jon Davey	For
Councillor Karen Davies	For
Councillor Phil Haseler	For
Councillor David Hilton	For
Councillor Maureen Hunt	For
Councillor Andrew Johnson	For
Councillor Greg Jones	For
Councillor Lynne Jones	For
Councillor Neil Knowles	For
Councillor Ewan Larcombe	For
Councillor Sayonara Luxton	For
Councillor Ross McWilliams	For
Councillor Samantha Rayner	For
Councillor Joshua Reynolds	For
Councillor Julian Sharpe	For
Councillor Shamsul Shelim	For
Councillor Gurch Singh	For
Councillor Donna Stimson	For
Councillor Chris Targowski	For
Councillor Amy Tisi	For

Councillor Leo Walters	For
Councillor Simon Werner	For
Carried	

RESOLVED that:

- i) the report and, in particular the feedback from the consultation, be noted and**
- ii) the proposed amendments to the Council Tax Reduction scheme for the financial year 2023/24 be approved.**

134. STATUTORY OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

Members considered proposals to approve the statutory appointments of Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer on an interim basis.

It was noted that the officers being considered as part of the report left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Councillor Johnson proposed the recommendations within the report by thanking both of the departing officers for their contributions to the borough. Adele Taylor, Section 151 Officer for her strong stewardship of the Council's finances. Emma Duncan, Monitoring Officer for her work creating the Corporate Plan, changing communications, and steering the Council through the LGA Peer Review. He supported their ambition to progress their careers. In relation to the interim appointees he stated that Andrew Vallance had proven himself as effective in his role as Deputy 151 Officer and Head of Finance, the fact that the Council now had a balanced budget was proof of that. He noted that Elaine Browne had steered the Council through significant legal challenges and issues with great success, determination and a measured approach.

Councillor Raynor seconded the proposals but had nothing to add to the debate.

Councillor Werner commented that he had been looking forward to working with Adele Taylor and wished her well in her new role in Slough. He was really pleased that Andrew Vallance was being given the interim post as he was looking forward to working with him from his reputation at the Fire Authority as well. He stated that it had been interesting working with Emma Duncan and wished her well in Cambridgeshire and said it would be good to get to work with Elaine Browne.

On the proposition of Councillor Johnson, Leader of the Council and seconded by Councillor Rayner it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

- i) The report be noted;**
- ii) Andrew Vallance, Head of Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer, be appointed as the Council's Section 151 Officer effective 20 March 2023 on an interim basis until such time as permanent arrangements have been determined; and**
- iii) Elaine Browne, Head of Law and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer, be appointed as the Council's Monitoring Officer effective 27 March 2023 on an interim basis until such time as permanent arrangements have been determined.**

135. RETURNING OFFICER AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER APPOINTMENTS AND APPROVAL OF ELECTIONS PAYMENT SCHEME

Members considered a number of proposals to support the delivery of elections including appointments to the role of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer, appointments to Deputy Electoral Registration Officer with duties limited to completing the Temporary Voter Authentication Certificate process as required by the Elections Act 2022 and an increase in the hourly rate paid to staff working in key roles to deliver the elections in May and future elections as set out in Appendix B of the agenda report.

It was noted that the officers being considered as part of the report left the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Councillor Rayner proposed the recommendations as set out in the report noting that as per the previous agenda item Emma Duncan was leaving the Council and therefore the Council needed to appoint an alternative Returning Officer in preparation for the upcoming elections. Due to the change in law in the Elections Act 2022 and the introduction of Voter ID the process for issuing temporary Voter Authority Certificates needs to be robust. The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate (VAC) for the local elections in England on 4 May 2023 was Tuesday 25 April 2023 at 5pm. If officers were not confident that the VAC would be delivered in time a temporary certificate could be put in place, this needed to be signed by the Electoral Registration Officer or their deputy and be collected in person. It was prudent to appoint Deputy Electoral Registration Officers to support this and ensure the process. During a review of the current election payments in comparison to other Berkshire authorities it was proposed that the payment structure be increased for election roles.

On the proposition of Councillor Rayner, Cabinet Member for Business, Corporate & Residents Services, Culture & Heritage, & Windsor and seconded by Councillor Johnson it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

- i) the report be noted;**
- ii) Stephen Evans, Chief Executive Designate be appointed as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead with effect from 17 April 2023 until further notice;**
- iii) Tony Reeves, Interim Chief Executive be appointed as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead with effect from 27 March 2023 until 16 April 2023;**
- iv) Kirsty Hunt, Service Lead Electoral and Democratic Services and Wendy Allum, Electoral Services Team Leader be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers with limited powers in relation to authorising Temporary Voter Authority Certificates and**
- v) increased staff pay rates for future election roles as detailed in Appendix B of the report be agreed.**

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COUNCIL - 23.05.23

AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Guildhall, Windsor - Guildhall on Tuesday 23 May 2023

PRESENT: The Mayor (Mrs Christine Bateson), The Deputy Mayor (Gary Muir) Councillors Clive Baskerville, Adam Bermange, George Blundell, Simon Bond, Mandy Brar, Catherine Del Campo, Alison Carpenter, Richard Coe, Carole Da Costa, Wisdom Da Costa, Suzanne Cross, Devon Davies, Karen Davies, Jack Douglas, Genevieve Gosling, Jodie Grove, Geoff Hill, Mark Howard, Maureen Hunt, Lynne Jones, Neil Knowles, Ewan Larcombe, Sayonara Luxton, Asghar Majeed, Siân Martin, Chris Moriarty, Helen Price, Gary Reeves, Joshua Reynolds, Julian Sharpe, George Shaw, Gurch Singh, Kashmir Singh, John Story, Helen Taylor, Amy Tisi, Julian Tisi, Simon Werner and Mark Wilson

In attendance: Richard Bateson, Caron North, Teresa Knowles and David Armitage

Officers: Stephen Evans, Kevin McDaniel, Andrew Durrant, Lin Ferguson, Elaine Browne, Nikki Craig, Andrew Vallance, Andrew Scott, David White, Sarah Lawrence, Dean Graham, Amarjit Mitharo

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley and Walters.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

3. Election of Mayor for 2023/24

The Mayor, Mrs Christine Bateson, welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting and reflected on her year as in office.

Mrs Bateson thanked all the officers who had supported her: Andrew Scott, Dean Graham, Emma Duncan, Amarjit Mitharo and Mark Blackshaw. In particular she highlighted Alison Singleton, Mayoral Secretary who had been brilliant. During her year as Mayor she had been very lucky to attend special and historic events. At the start of her year she had attended events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which was a wonderful start to an interesting and enjoyable 12 months. She reflected that, in September, she had felt privileged to journey to London to see the Queen lying in state and attend the service in Saint George's Chapel following the funeral procession. She had also been involved in the proclamation of His Majesty the King, attended Buckingham Palace to deliver a royal address to him and saw the Coronation Concert in the grounds of Windsor Castle. She reflected that alongside the high-profile events she had also enjoyed all the other engagements such as opening new stores, visiting day centre, attending community events and meeting lots of people at around 200 events. She reported that the borough was blessed with hundreds of volunteers, and she was astonished by the hours of work and effort made by Scout Leaders, Rotarians and Lions. The Windsor and Maidenhead Community and Interfaith Groups did such good work to keep harmony and peace as well as celebrating the diverse borough. She concluded that it was lovely to finish her 28 years as a Councillor as Mayor she had many happy memories and had made many friends. She was looking forward to active retirement and would be travelling abroad to visit family and friends.

COUNCIL - 23.05.23

The Mayor invited nominations for the election of the Mayor of the Royal Borough for 2022/23.

In proposing Councillor Neil Knowles for the role of Mayor, Councillor Jones stated that he was born in Newcastle Under Lyme but moved to Windsor at an early age with his military family. They were then posted all over the world including Germany, Malaya and Singapore before returning to the UK and Windsor, where he attended Dedworth Green Secondary School as it was then. He joined the Army and The Life Guards straight from school and served in Windsor, Cyprus, Germany, Canada before returning to Windsor again, where he met Teresa.

Following a tour of Mounted Duty Neil applied for and passed the Army Pilots course becoming an Army Helicopter Pilot in the Army Air Corps serving everywhere there was conflict until completing his Regular service moving onto the reserve, in which he served with the Royal Air Force until the age of 55, when he retired as a Squadron Leader.

On leaving the Army, Neil became a Radio and TV presenter and producer working for the BBC then local commercial Radio before joining the British Forces Broadcasting Service, again working everywhere there was conflict until he moved into project, administration and financial management in the education sector.

She continued that Neil has been a Ward Councillor for Old Windsor since May 2019, working hard to make a difference to local residents and is particularly keen on preserving the green belt. He is very active in the community having run Windsor Air Cadets for some years, he is a school governor at St Peters Middle School, a trustee of Old Windsor alms houses and keeps his military links as a member of Flemish Farm based Light Cavalry, the Honourable Artillery Company, and is also a member of the Historic Army Aircraft flight.

She continued that Teresa and Neil have a son, Sam, who runs a successful events business in the Netherlands and a grandson Max. On a personal note she commented that she had thoroughly enjoyed working alongside Neil representing Old Windsor and said that life was never boring with him around. Whilst he would be proud to be Mayor she considered he had the experience, skills and authority to ensure the smooth running of Council meetings and carry out his duties with the passion and good humour he was known for.

In seconding the motion Councillor Hill explained that as Mayor, Councillor Knowles would be accompanied by his wife, Teresa Knowles as Mayoress. She had attended Kins Court School and St Peters School, Old Windsor and Windsor Girls School before starting work in the early years sector. Teresa had become a specialist OFSTED inspector, working mentoring and training Early Years practitioners. Teresa enjoyed crafting and was always making something.

It was moved by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Hill and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that Councillor Neil Knowles be elected Mayor of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the ensuing Municipal year.

The Chief Executive declared Councillor Knowles duly elected Mayor.

Councillor Knowles made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by Councillors Jones and Hill.

THE MAYOR (COUNCILLOR KNOWLES) IN THE CHAIR

Mrs Bateson presented the Mayor with the Mace, the Borough seal and the keys to the Mayor's Parlour.

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In making his speech of acceptance, Councillor Knowles thanked Lieutenant Colonel Tom Armitage from the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment for allowing officers Goodman and Tye to represent when he had begun his working life. He also thanked John Cookson from The Light Cavalry Honourable Artillery Company based at Flemish Farm where he spent his spare time.

He thanked Mrs Christine Bateson and Richard Bateson for representing the borough the previous year, noting it was a year like no other and her length of service as an elected representative was inspiring. He asked everyone present to join him in applauding her achievement.

He commented that he did not think he had dreamed of being Mayor of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead when he was 15 years old but he had achieved many of his ambitions. He became an elected councillor when he had followed his wife's advice to take action. He stated that she was his 'rock' and anything he achieved was due to her support. In his forthcoming year he would try to continue his support for Blue Acre Horse Rescue in Old Windsor and the Household Cavalry Foundation. He also intended to support and highlight local small medium businesses. He commented that they were still suffering post covid and wanted to update the 70s slogan "Buy British" to "Buy Borough".

He concluded that he hoped his appointment was the start of a new era and a friendlier Council which was less adversarial and consequently more attractive to residents who may be apprehensive about becoming Councillors. He thanked everyone for his appointment and hoped he would be a good servant to them all.

The Mayor presented Mrs Christine Bateson and Richard Bateson with their Past Mayor's and Past Consort badges.

4. Election of Deputy Mayor for 2023/24

In nominating Councillor Bond for the office of Deputy Mayor, Councillor Werner stated that he had known him for over 35 years from when he was helping in a local elections campaign in 1987. Councillor Bond had taught him that being loud was not the way to be effective, he thought him diligence, perseverance and hard work. He stated that Councillor Bond had advised him to consider in decision making how less fortunate people would be affected and what could be done to empower them. He advised that residents in Belmont also used words such as diligence, perseverance and hard work to describe Councillor Bond. He reflected that Councillor Bond was the one Councillor, over the past four years, that every Councillor from every party would stop talking to listen to. He reported that Councillor Bond was very humble and there was a long list of charities that he had supported over the years including setting up Wild Maidenhead and Maidenhead Foodshare, MaidEnergy and the Crauford Arms. He noted that those attributes were perfect for the role of Deputy Mayor.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Price commented that his quiet but determined style would prepare him for the role. Councillor Bond would be supported by his consort, David Armitage. David had applied his food science studies in his career at Rank Hovis McDougal Research Centre. During retirement he has actively campaigned for clearer labelling on food products so that those without perfect vision can read the ingredients. David is helpful, supportive and sociable and also has an enquiring scientific curiosity which were ideal attributes as consort to the Deputy Mayor.

It was moved by Councillor Werner, seconded by Councillor Price, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that Councillor Simon Bond be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the ensuing Municipal Year.

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The Chief Executive declared Councillor Simon Bond duly appointed Deputy Mayor. Councillor Bond made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by Councillors Price and Hill.

In his speech of acceptance, Councillor Bond said he it been a privilege to represent the residents of Belmont ward and wanted to thank them for electing himself and Sian martin as their Ward Councillors. He reflected that when he was approached about becoming Deputy Mayor he had been surprised as it was outside of his comfort zone. He added that everyone says it is a great opportunity to learn about life across the borough through the voluntary and community sector which was something he was looking forward to do. He reflected that it was never too late to learn something new and considered that with the new Council this was something everyone would be doing a lot of. He thanked council officers and councillors for the various lessons he had learnt on his Council journey so far. He was looking forward to working with the new Mayor over the coming year and thanked everyone for giving him the opportunity.

Councillor Bond then presented Mr Gary Muir and Caron North with their past Deputy Mayor's and past Deputy Mayoress's badges.

5. Election of Leader of the Council

The Mayor invited nominations for the election of Leader of the Council for 2023 – 2027.

On the proposition of Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Del Campo it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor Simon Werner be appointed as Leader of the Royal Borough for 2023 – 2027.

6. Political balance and appointment of Panels, Chairs and Vice-Chairs for 2023/24

Council considered the political balance in accordance with the duty in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review and determine the representation of the different political groups on bodies appointed by the council following the May election. The Mayor advised the meeting that an updated report had been circulated to councillors with the details of nominations provided. The report highlighted proposed changes by the new administration and the executive arrangements for the municipal year.

On the proposition of Councillor Werner, Leader of the Council seconded by Councillor Jones it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that

- i) **the political balance of the council as a result of the local elections held on 4 May 2023 as detailed in paragraph 2.1 be noted;**
- ii) **the membership of the committees, panels and forums be approved for the ensuing Municipal Year as detailed in the Appendix to the minutes;**
- iii) **the Chairs and Vice-Chairs be appointed for the ensuing Municipal Year as detailed in the Appendix to the minutes;**
- iv) **authority be delegated to the Service Lead – Electoral and Democratic Services to amend/make further appointments on the nomination of the relevant Group Leader; and**

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- v) **authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to amend the constitution as appropriate in light of any amendments to the structure of Panels, Committees and Forums as detailed in the Appendix to the minutes.**

The meeting, which started at 7.00 pm, ended at 7.38 pm.

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COUNCIL - 27.06.23

AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber - Town Hall - Maidenhead on Tuesday 27 June 2023

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Neil Knowles), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Simon Bond)

Councillors Clive Baskerville, Adam Bermange, George Blundell, David Buckley, Mandy Brar, Catherine Del Campo, Alison Carpenter, Richard Coe, Suzanne Cross, Devon Davies, Karen Davies, Jack Douglas, Genevieve Gosling, Jodie Grove, Geoff Hill, Mark Howard, Maureen Hunt, Lynne Jones, Ewan Larcombe, Sayonara Luxton, Asghar Majeed, Siân Martin, Chris Moriarty, Helen Price, Gary Reeves, Joshua Reynolds, Julian Sharpe, George Shaw, Gurch Singh, Kashmir Singh, John Story, Helen Taylor, Amy Tisi, Julian Tisi, Simon Werner and Mark Wilson

Officers in attendance: Stephen Evans, Elaine Browne, Andrew Vallance, David White, Sarah Lawrence and Kirsty Hunt

Officers in attendance virtually: Ian Motuel

7. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Da Costa, W. Da Costa and Walters.

8. Declarations of Interest

In relation to Item 6 – Amendments to the 2023/24 Children’s Services Capital Programme, Councillor Del Campo advised that she had a sensitive registerable interest. Having sought advice from the Interim Monitoring Officer, she would be participating in the discussion and vote for the item.

In relation to Item 5 – Datchet Neighbourhood Plan – Making of the Plan, Councillor Larcombe stated that he owned land and buildings in Datchet, was a member of Datchet Parish Council and also the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Group. He had lived in Datchet since 1977 and was first elected to Datchet Parish Council in 1986.

In relation to Item 5 – Datchet Neighbourhood Plan – Making of the Plan, Councillor Bermange stated he was a member of the Open Spaces Society, which campaigned for the protection of public open spaces through mechanisms including the designation of Local Green Spaces. If made, the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan, through Policy DAT7 would make a number of such designations.

In relation to Item 6 – Amendments to the 2023/24 Children’s Services Capital Programme, Councillor Bermange stated he was a Trustee and unpaid director of Autism Berkshire and noted that some of the recommended appropriations of the SEND and Alternative Provision capital budget would likely assist beneficiaries of the charity more than others will.

In relation to Item 6 – Amendments to the 2023/24 Children’s Services Capital Programme, Councillor Wilson stated that he was a Co-Chair of Governors at Windsor Boys School.

In relation to Item 5 – Datchet Neighbourhood Plan – Making of the Plan, Councillor Buckley advised that he was a member of the Steering Group for Datchet Neighbourhood Plan and would therefore leave the meeting for the duration of the item.

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In relation to Item 6 – Amendments to the 2023/24 Children’s Services Capital Programme, Councillor Baskerville stated that he was a Governor at Alwyn Infant School and Courthouse Junior School.

In relation to Item 6 – Amendments to the 2023/24 Children’s Services Capital Programme, Councillor J Tisi stated that he was a Governor at St. Edwards Royal Free Middle School and having sought advice from the Interim Monitoring Officer, he would be participating in the discussion and vote for the item.

9. Mayor's Communications

The Mayor shared a series of images with the meeting to highlight activities he had attended since Annual Council including:

- attending the Maidenhead Lions duck race
- Armed Forces Day flag raising
- attending the Garter Service
- joining the Friends of Windsor Parish Church for their 10th Anniversary
- unveiling the Maidenhead Community Quilt which was on display in the Town Hall before the meeting started
- launching the Help for Heroes collection at Dedworth Tesco
- attending Marlow Regatta
- with the Duchess of Edinburgh at Royal Ascot

10. Appointment of Statutory Officers

Council considered the report to approve statutory appointments to the roles of Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer. Elaine Browne, Head of Law and Governance and Interim Monitoring Officer left the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Werner proposed the recommendations as set out in the agenda report. He commented that the budget passed in February had already fallen apart and a strong Section 151 Officer would be essential. He was pleased to nominate Elizabeth Griffiths and commented on how impressive he had found Andrew Vallance and he looked forward to continuing to work together. He was pleased that the Council was also confirming Elaine Browne as the permanent Monitoring Officer at the Council. He stated that the new administration was looking forward to a new era, to working together across party and to removing the toxic atmosphere that had previously been operated under.

Councillor Jones seconded the recommendations stating that the proposals were sensible and echoed the comments that the Council was overdue a change in member culture that would reduce the workload of the new monitoring officer. She thanked Andrew Vallance for his professionalism over the last few years and as Interim S151 for the Council and looked forward to continuing to work with him. Councillor Jones stated that the Section 151 Officer had five functions: certifying the robustness of the budget, ensuring lawful decision making and financial prudence, providing financial information and advising councillors and officers in their roles within the finance framework. She noted that Elizabeth Griffiths was a qualified accountant who had held the position in her role with West Oxfordshire District Council. She concluded that having taken part in the recruitment process for the role of Executive Director: Resources she believed that Elizabeth had the experience, judgement and character to ensure the delivery of good financial management.

Councillor Hunt reiterated that Elizabeth Griffiths was an excellent nomination as she had been part of the selection committee so was aware of the qualities she was bringing to the Council. She commented that she was sure this Council would be the same as the previous Council, she had not noticed the toxicity apart from the opposition.

On the proposition of Councillor Werner, Leader of the Council and lead member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection and Maidenhead and seconded by Councillor Jones it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that

- i) the report be noted;**
- ii) Elizabeth Griffiths be appointed as the Council's Section 151 Officer following her appointment to the role of Executive Director of Resources; and**
- iii) Elaine Browne, currently Head of Law and Governance and Interim Monitoring Officer, be appointed as the Council's permanent Monitoring Officer.**

11. Datchet Neighbourhood Plan - Making of the Plan

Council considered the report regarding the 'making' the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, and for it to be used in decision making for relevant planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan area. This was following the referendum on 4 May 2023, where a significant majority of votes were cast in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Having declared an interest Councillor Buckley left the meeting for the duration of the item.

Councillor Bermange proposed the recommendations as set out in the report explaining that when done well Neighbourhood Plans could provide a powerful set of tools for local people to help shape the development and growth of the local area to meet their community's needs. He stated that Neighbourhood Planning gave communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their area and the resulting document contained an array of Neighbourhood-specific policies in areas such as design, heritage, the green and blue environment and meeting the housing needs of older people.

He reported that he had spent some time in the ward with Councillors Buckley and Larcombe who were also long-servicing members of Datchet Parish Council, who had been instrumental in bringing the document forward and Councillor Grove who shared a real passion for the area. He had met the leading members of the Datchet Village Society, which worked in partnership with the Parish through the Steering Group. The Society's members had provided a tour and explained the history of a number of Non-Designated Heritage Assets that would be offered additional protection through local listing via the Plan. He reported that on 4 May 2023 87.5% of votes cast in the referendum were in favour of making the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan.

He noted that the original application for designation of Datchet as a Neighbourhood Plan Area was submitted more than a decade ago and that after the Plan was made the next step was for the Council, as local planning authority, to give the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan the proper weight within decision making, as part of the Local Development Plan and ensuring, if and when required, that appropriate enforcement actions were deployed to preserve the integrity of the Plan.

Councillor Larcombe seconded the motion and stated that the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would like to express their thanks to the Royal Borough and its officers, firstly for the opportunity to create a Neighbourhood Plan, and secondly for their assistance and support throughout its development. He commented that after many years in the making, the Plan received overwhelming support at the recent referendum. The Steering Group hoped that the Council would formally adopt the Plan so that residents' views about the development of

the village could be taken into account, helping to protect Datchet's unique character and heritage.

Councillor Hunt commented that she had been involved in one of the first steering groups developing a Neighbourhood Plans and understood the amount of time invested by the volunteers to deliver this plan.

Councillor Bermange summed up that there were a number of areas whose plans were still in development and he encourage them to learn lessons from those that had gone through it.

On the proposition of Councillor Bermange, lead member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management and seconded by Councillor Larcombe it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that

- i) the report be noted;**
- ii) in accepting the result of the referendum, agreed to formally 'make' the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and;**
- iii) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management to make minor non material amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan prior to its publication.**

12. Amendments to the 2023/24 Children's Services Capital Programme

Council considered the report regarding proposed adjustments to the Council's 2023/24 approved capital programme. The Mayor reminded those present that the report contained a restricted appendix which had been circulated to Councillors separately and would require moving into closed session to be discussed in detail. No one indicated that it would be necessary to discuss the restricted information in order to consider the proposals.

Councillor Amy Tisi proposed the recommendations set out in the report explaining that it was focused on ensuring that resources were properly allocated to the education of children and young people within the borough. She reported that the paper was originally due to go to Full Council in April, but that meeting had been cancelled due to its proximity to the election.

She explained that the paper set out clearly how budgets were being amended and the funding sources behind the three changes. The first proposals was the budget for the school maintenance programme which is funded by the Department for Education (DFE) through the School Condition Allocation grant. Like many DFE grants, this was awarded yearly and the amount was not known until April, after the budget had been agreed by Full Council in February. This means an estimate based on previous years was used until the full amount was known. She was pleased to advise that the grant was £70k more than expected. Cabinet would be considering schemes at local authority and voluntary aided schools to be funded by this budget.

Councillor A Tisi commented that the second adjustment was to provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disabilities. She reported that Council had approved a budget in February centrally funded via a DFE grant. After the budget had been set, Cabinet approved four new SEN units or resource bases to provide specialist support at mainstream schools: Trevelyan middle and Hilltop First in Windsor, Desborough College and Cox Green in Maidenhead as well as an Early Years school readiness hub to help the youngest learners at The Lawns Nursery School. This was supported by public consultation but required Council approval for the associated budgetary amendments required.

She concluded that the final adjustment was work underway to expand Windsor Girls school to meet increased demand. The Windsor Learning Partnership wished to undertake some of their own works to the main building at the same time, at a cost to them. An opportunity had arisen to bring their works under the same contract as the build, making a cost saving. The change to the budget reflected that additional work would be paid upfront by the Windsor Learning Partnership before the work was procured. She stated that this would benefit the schools' most senior pupils at no additional cost to the council.

Councillor Wilson seconded the recommendations drawing the meeting's attention in particular to the allocations of capital budget to improve the borough's provision for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). He reiterated that this was an important area, these are excellent initiatives and some of which had already started.

Councillor Hunt requested an update on progress of the access improvements at Manor Green School as she was aware of ongoing issues on Cannon Lane and would appreciate being able to update affected residents.

On the proposition of Councillor A Tisi, lead member for Children's Services, Education and Windsor and seconded by Councillor Wilson it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that

- i) the report be noted;**
- ii) amending the budget for the 2023/24 school condition programme to £1,170,524 be approved;**
- iii) the budgets for the delivery of the Royal Borough's SEND and AP Capital Strategy, as set out in Table 2 be approved; and**
- iv) an increase of £95,000 to the budget for the expansion of Windsor Girls' School, be approved to be fully funded by a contribution from the Windsor Learning Partnership.**

The meeting, which started at 7.00 pm, ended at 7.35 pm.

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MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) or Other Registerable Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

Any Member with concerns about the nature of their interest should consult the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Non-participation in case of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI)

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your DPIs (summary below, further details set out in Table 1 of the Members' Code of Conduct) you must disclose the interest, **not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room** unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted by the Monitoring Officer in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a DPI.

Where you have a DPI on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet Member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it.

DPIs (relating to the Member or their partner) include:

- *Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.*
- *Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses*
- *Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.*
- *Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the council.*
- *Any licence to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.*
- *Any tenancy where the landlord is the council, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest in the securities of.*
- *Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:*
 - a) *that body has a place of business or land in the area of the council, and*
 - b) *either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.*

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (summary below and as set out in Table 2 of the Members Code of Conduct), you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.** If it is a 'sensitive interest' (as agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other Registerable Interests:

- a) any unpaid directorships
 - b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
 - c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
 - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

Disclosure of Non- Registerable Interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a DPI) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, or a body included under Other Registerable Interests in Table 2 you must disclose the interest. **You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting** but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer) you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –

- a. your own financial interest or well-being;
- b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
- c. a financial interest or well-being of a body included under Other Registerable Interests as set out in Table 2 (as set out above and in the Members' code of Conduct)

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied.

Where a matter (referred to in the paragraph above) **affects** the financial interest or well-being:

- a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise **must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation**. If it is a 'sensitive interest' (agreed in advance by the Monitoring Officer), you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

Other declarations

Members may wish to declare at the beginning of the meeting any other information they feel should be in the public domain in relation to an item on the agenda; such Member statements will be included in the minutes for transparency.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Since Annual Council the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have carried out the following engagements:-

- Led the Mayor's Sunday Civic Service
- Attended a couple of charity Big Hearted BBQs hosted by the students of The Green Room School, Clewer
- Visited Royal Ascot Golf Club for the official opening by TRH Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh of the Queen Elizabeth II Memorial Wood
- Attended the Coronation Reception hosted by the 1st Battalion of the Coldstream Guards
- Visited the exhibition and attended the "Our Changing Earth" presentation
- Judged the floats and presented prizes at Old Windsor Carnival
- Attended the 10th anniversary service for the Friends of Windsor Parish Church
- Attended several meetings including the Royal Borough's Twinning Committee; Spoope Merry and Rixman Foundation, Pooles and Rings Charity; Charles Davis Trust; No. 22 AGM
- Attended several citizenship ceremonies
- Launched the creative mural of "Our Maidenhead Community" at the Craft Coop in Maidenhead
- Launched the Help for Heroes campaign in the Tesco Dedworth store
- Started the duck race and visited the stalls at Maidenhead Lions' Duck Derby and Family Fun Day
- Led the Armed Forces flagraising for the Royal Borough
- Attended the Garter Ceremony in St George's Chapel
- Presented certificates at the Year 11 Graduation Ceremony at Furze Platt Senior School
- Visited the Windsor and Eton Rotary Club's Summer Fayre and Duck Race and in conjunction hosted an event for Armed Forces Day
- Attended the Royal Free Singers 50th anniversary concert
- Chaired meeting of Extraordinary Council
- Attended the Berkshire Maestros Junior Festival
- Visited Tesco Dedworth for their Pride event
- Attended the 40th anniversary reception for Dingley's Promise
- Attended a performance at Manor Green School
- Attended a Windsor Maidenhead Symphony Orchestra concert
- Opened the Windsor Ascot Maidenhead Community Land Trust Stakeholders Conference
- Attended the Lions Club of Maidenhead anniversary tree unveiling in Kidwells Park
- Opened CAMRA (Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead) 10th Beer and Cider Festival in Maidenhead
- Attended the Annual Showcase of Chance to Dance Stars
- Attended the Bishop of Reading's Supper Party
- Visited Filling Good in Maidenhead for "Plastic Free July"
- Attended the Windsor & Eton Sea Cadets Lease Party/Afternoon Tea
- Attended the 50th anniversary celebration of Maidenhead Library
- Attended both the opening and closing ceremonies of the Relay for Life event at Ascot Racecourse
- Joined a councillors tour of the Legoland Windsor Resort

- Launched the mayoral twitter account @MayorRoyalBoro

Report Title:	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	None
Meeting and Date:	Full Council – 25 July 2023
Responsible Officer(s):	Mark Beeley – Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview and Scrutiny
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

Part 4B of the Council’s Constitution highlights that:

“The Overview and Scrutiny Panels will report annually to Full Council on its workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.”

This report highlights the work of Overview and Scrutiny in the 2022/23 municipal year.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Full Council notes the report and considers the work of Overview and Scrutiny in the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
To note the report. This is the recommended option	Overview and Scrutiny is required to submit an annual report each year on its work for consideration by Full Council. If Full Council chooses not to receive the report, this would be in breach of the Constitution.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no key implications from this report.

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 There are no financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 There are no risks arising as a result of this report.

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 Equalities. An Equality Impact Assessment is available as Appendix A.

7.2 Climate change/sustainability. No impacts.

7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. Residents are able to submit topics for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Panel. All personal details are anonymised.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 All Panel Members were given the opportunity to include comments for consideration as part of the annual report. These have been included under the 'Improvements highlighted by Panel Members' sections of the report.

9. APPENDICES

9.1 This report is supported by two appendices:

- Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix B – Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 This report is supported by four background documents:

- [RBWM Constitution - Part 4 - Overview and Scrutiny](#)
- [Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Reports and Minutes](#)
- [People Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Reports and Minutes](#)
- [Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Reports and Minutes](#)

11. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officer (or deputy)</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance/ interim S151 Officer	07/07/23	14/07/23
Elaine Browne	Head of Law & Governance/ Interim Monitoring Officer	07/07/23	07/07/23
<i>Mandatory: Procurement Manager (or deputy) - if report requests approval to go to tender or award a contract</i>			
Lyn Hitchinson	Procurement Manager	N/A	N/A
<i>Mandatory: Data Protection Officer (or deputy) - if decision will result in processing of personal data; to advise on DPIA</i>			
Samantha Wootton	Data Protection Officer	N/A	N/A
<i>Mandatory: Equalities Officer – to advise on EQiA, or agree an EQiA is not required</i>			
Ellen McManus-Fry	Equalities & Engagement Officer	07/07/23	10/07/23
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Stephen Evans	Chief Executive	07/07/23	
Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place	07/07/23	
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Adult Social Care & Health	07/07/23	
Lin Ferguson	Executive Director of Children's Services & Education	07/07/23	
<i>Other consultees (where relevant)</i>			
Kirsty Hunt	Service Lead – Electoral and Democratic Services	07/07/23	07/07/23
Nikki Craig	Assistant Director of HR, Corporate Projects and IT	07/07/23	14/07/23

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For information	No	No

Report Author: Mark Beeley – Principal Democratic Services Officer – Overview and Scrutiny

mark.beeley@rbwm.gov.uk
01628 796345

Equality Impact Assessment

For support in completing this EQIA, please consult the EQIA Guidance Document or contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

1. Background Information

Title of policy/strategy/plan:	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report
Service area:	Governance
Directorate:	Resources

Provide a brief explanation of the proposal:

- What are its intended outcomes?
- Who will deliver it?
- Is it a new proposal or a change to an existing one?

That Full Council notes the report and considers the work of Overview and Scrutiny in the 2022/23 municipal year.

2. Relevance Check

Is this proposal likely to directly impact people, communities or RBWM employees?

- If No, please explain why not, including how you've considered equality issues.
- Will this proposal need a EQIA at a later stage? (for example, for a forthcoming action plan)

Overview and Scrutiny looks to enhance the lives of residents and improve council services by providing comments and recommendations to officers and Cabinet. This is designed to help improve decision making and ensure that all options are considered.

If 'No', proceed to 'Sign off'. If unsure, please contact equality@rbwm.gov.uk

3. Evidence Gathering and Stakeholder Engagement

Who will be affected by this proposal?

For example, users of a particular service, residents of a geographical area, staff

Among those affected by the proposal, are protected characteristics (age, sex, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage/civil partnership) disproportionately represented?

For example, compared to the general population do a higher proportion have disabilities?

What engagement/consultation has been undertaken or planned?

- How has/will equality considerations be taken into account?
- Where known, what were the outcomes of this engagement?

What sources of data and evidence have been used in this assessment?

Please consult the Equalities Evidence Grid for relevant data. Examples of other possible sources of information are in the Guidance document.

4. Equality Analysis

Please detail, **using supporting evidence**:

- How the protected characteristics below might influence the needs and experiences of individuals, in relation to this proposal.
- How these characteristics might affect the impact of this proposal.

Tick positive/negative impact as appropriate. If there is no impact, or a neutral impact, state 'Not Applicable'

More information on each protected characteristic is provided in the Guidance document.

	Details and supporting evidence	Potential positive impact	Potential negative impact
Age			
Disability			
Sex			
Race, ethnicity and religion			
Sexual orientation and gender reassignment			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Marriage and civil partnership			
Armed forces community			
Socio-economic considerations e.g. low income, poverty			
Children in care/Care leavers			

5. Impact Assessment and Monitoring

If you have not identified any disproportionate impacts and the questions below are not applicable, leave them blank and proceed to Sign Off.

What measures have been taken to ensure that groups with protected characteristics are able to benefit from this change, or are not disadvantaged by it?

For example, adjustments needed to accommodate the needs of a particular group

Where a potential negative impact cannot be avoided, what measures have been put in place to mitigate or minimise this?

- For planned future actions, provide the name of the responsible individual and the target date for implementation.

How will the equality impacts identified here be monitored and reviewed in the future?

See guidance document for examples of appropriate stages to review an EQIA.

6. Sign Off

Completed by: Mark Beeley	Date: 07/07/23
Approved by:	Date:

If this version of the EQIA has been reviewed and/or updated:

Reviewed by:	Date:
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Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
**Overview and Scrutiny
Annual Report**



Overview and Scrutiny at RBWM

Overview and Scrutiny at RBWM consists of three main panels; Corporate, People and Place. Each Panel is aligned to a core theme of the Corporate Plan, which was adopted in November 2021 and is more closely aligned with the responsibilities of each of the Executive Directors. People and Place have four scheduled meetings a year, with Corporate having six meetings a year due to its wider responsibility and overarching scrutiny role.

There is a requirement for Overview and Scrutiny to submit an annual report each year to a meeting of Council, highlighting the work of each Panel and what topics have been scrutinised. This report gives a brief summary of the work and findings of each Panel while looking to pick out some key areas of positive scrutiny, along with some commentary on what was achieved by the Panel.

The report concludes with some figures of Overview and Scrutiny across the municipal year and further information on how residents can become more involved in the scrutiny process.

Each Panel’s membership and remit are outlined below:

Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Panel	
Membership: Councillors Gerry Clark (Chairman), John Story (Vice Chairman), Simon Bond, Karen Davies, Greg Jones, Lynne Jones, Helen Price, Julian Sharpe, Shamsul Shelim, Leo Walters and Simon Werner.	
Responsibilities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Revenues and Benefits • Library and Resident Services • Human Resources • Information Technology • Legal Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance • Strategy • Communications • Transformation • Commissioning and Procurement • Performance Monitoring

Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel	
Membership: Councillors John Bowden (Chairman), Helen Taylor (Vice Chairman), Greg Jones, Maureen Hunt, Sayonara Luxton, Shamsul Shelim, Leo Walters, Joshua Reynolds, Mandy Brar, Gurch Singh and Jon Davey.	
Co-opted Members: Margaret Lenton (Wraysbury Parish Council) and Pat McDonald (White Waltham Parish Council)	
Responsibilities:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Infrastructure, Sustainability and Economic Growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbourhoods • Health Partnerships and Community Development
<p>In addition, when considering matters of crime and disorder the Panel’s main objective is to ensure that the Community Safety Partnership is held accountable for the discharge of its executive functions, to enable the voice and concerns of the public and its communities to be heard and drive improvement in public services. In addition to the Panel’s broad terms of reference as detailed above, the Panel will be responsible for the overview and scrutiny of the following:</p> <p>To consider the effectiveness of actions undertaken by the responsible authorities on the Community Safety Partnership (‘CSP’);</p> <p>Make reports or recommendations to Cabinet/Council with regard to those policies developed by the CSP and the effectiveness of the functions managed through the CSP.</p> <p>To consider a number of issues in consultation with the relevant partners on the CSP which reflect local community need and make recommendations to Cabinet.</p>	

People Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Membership: Councillors Sayonara Luxton (Chairman), Maureen Hunt (Vice Chairman), Clive Baskerville, Catherine Del Campo, Gerry Clark, Carole Da Costa, Neil Knowles, Gary Muir.

Responsibilities:

- Adult Services
- Children's Services
- Schools and Education
- Environmental Health
- Housing
- Public Health

The People Overview & Scrutiny Panel shall have powers to deal with routine matters within the functions relating to Adult Social Care, Adult Services general and Public Health Services. The Panel shall have the enhanced review and scrutiny powers in line with provisions in Health and Social Care Act 2012, including power of referral to the Secretary of State for Health.

Ensuring that the council fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities, including child sexual exploitation. This needs to include children's social care and education provision.



Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Review of the Corporate Plan and Performance Reporting

The Panel has been closely aligned to the RBWM Corporate Plan and is involved in the oversight and monitoring of the Plan, ensuring that the 50 goals and objectives are on track. At regular intervals, the Panel has been presented with a summary of the latest position and any areas that are below or off target are highlighted. The Panel has been able to gain reassurance from key senior officers on performance.

Following the July 2022 meeting, the Panel agreed to refer air pollution performance to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further investigation. Following a review of the responsibilities of each Panel, the matter was added to the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel work programme. Following the scope of the topic being clarified and agreed by both the Panel and Panel Members from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, it was decided that a Task and Finish Group would be the most suitable format to consider air pollution. Work on the Group commenced in spring 2023 but was unable to meet before the local election.

In November 2022, the Panel had the opportunity to consider a refresh of the Corporate Plan, a year after it had been adopted. The cost of living crisis was a significant issue for the council and some targets needed to be reconsidered as a result. There was also an opportunity for officers and the Panel to consider performance against all targets in the plan, particularly highlighting the goals which were not being achieved.

Draft Budget Scrutiny Challenge Session

In December 2022, the Panel had an opportunity to scrutinise the draft budget proposals in a dedicated challenge session. Each Executive Director presented the budget proposals for their service areas before the meeting was opened up for a discussion. Councillors scrutinised various areas of the budget:

- How bus services would be funded going forward.
- Ensuring that adult social care services could still support residents who were moved back home.
- Considering how different groups of people would be affected by the budget proposals and how the budget tied in with the RBWM Corporate Plan.
- Understanding the risks and achievability of the savings outlined.
- Considering the level of Council Tax which was proposed to be increased by 5%.
- Discussing the quantity of council tax which went towards adult social care, along with the budget provided for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- The impact on staff at the council and community granted as a result of changes put forward.

The Panel decided to refer the relevant budget lines to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the People Overview and Scrutiny for further scrutiny on these areas. The Panel also provided comments and feedback to Cabinet on the fees and charges in the Budget at the January meeting, this helped to form the final budget which was presented to Cabinet in February 2023. The Panel made a number of comments and recommendations on parking to the Cabinet Member for Finance and these were considered as part of the final budget which was put forward by Cabinet.

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was considered by scrutiny in advance of being considered by Cabinet, to allow for some pre-decision scrutiny. Following approval by Cabinet, the report went to a meeting of Council in September to be adopted. The strategy was a high level look at long term savings, with the main aim to align the strategy with key areas set out in the RBWM Corporate Plan.

The Panel considered the strategy and looked to test the assumptions made by officers. The plan initially did not include reference to the health and wellbeing and climate objective in the corporate plan as they were difficult areas to achieve savings. A recommendation was made to Cabinet and agreed unanimously by the Panel, that the strategy should include reference to these two objectives as they were core parts of the corporate plan.

Equalities

Following a scoping document produced by Councillor Helen Price, it was agreed that the Panel would receive updates on the work of the equalities programme. This took the form of a number of briefing notes which were circulated to Panel Members and allowed them to feedback any comments into the process. The Panel were able to consider two key documents; a review of the Equality Impact Assessment and a refresh of the equality objectives.

Resident Scrutiny Suggestion – RBWM App

A topic submitted by a resident for consideration by the Panel involved the potential of an RBWM App, which residents could use to access council information and services, along with things like the Report It tool. The Panel had initially discussed the idea in the previous municipal year and it had been agreed that officers would take the idea away and explore the viability of an app being produced.

In November 2022, a report was brought back to the Panel. It was noted that due to the reorganisation of the transformation team and the resource available, there would be little benefit to producing a separate app. The website had been configured to work well on phones and officers had suggested that this should be focused on being improved further.

Call In

The Panel considered two call ins over the course of the municipal year, with both items being considered at the same meeting in September 2022. Cedar Tree House was reconsidered by the Panel due to reasons including:

- Officers recommendation not being accepted by Cabinet and the reasons why this had not been accepted were not clear.
- No other sale options had been considered, the property would be sold at a loss.

The Panel debated the item and considered that all options that had been considered on Cedar Tree House. The Leader of the Council clarified that the option of transforming the property into three separate flats was considered as part of the report, this could be reconsidered at the next Cabinet meeting.

The result of the call in was that the matter was referred back to Cabinet, to discuss and reconsider the sale options for Cedar Tree House. Cabinet considered the comments made by scrutiny and agreed to sell the property as a family dwelling for best market consideration, while considering the option to sell as three separate flats.

The second call in considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel was on the St Cloud Way site in Maidenhead. The site had been sold to a developer but there was concern amongst Councillors that the amount the council was getting for the site was too low and needed to be reconsidered.

It was explained at the meeting that the land value was different to what had been put forward in 2017 but RBWM was in a contract with the developer to go ahead with the sale, the council could be in breach of contract and incur additional financial penalties should it not go ahead. Members of the Panel questioned the impact of the new land value on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and whether this value would have an impact on other projects and services that the council provided.

Following the discussion, the Panel concluded that the council needed to go ahead with the decision, however they requested further documentation on the land valuation from officers to increase their understanding and oversight of the decision.

Improvements highlighted by Panel Members:

The Panel should look to be involved in policy development from Cabinet and be involved at an earlier stage. Pre-scrutiny would help improve decisions made and ensure that scrutiny was not used when decisions had already been made.



People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Resident Scrutiny Topic – Breastfeeding

The Panel considered a resident scrutiny suggestion on making RBWM a ‘breastfeeding friendly borough’. This was something that had been brought to the attention of the Panel and they agreed that it was something that mothers should be encouraged and supported to do in a safe environment. It was agreed by the Panel that the Public Health team would do a piece of engagement work which focused on interactions with local businesses to understand the current breastfeeding offer of services and venues from across the borough. The Economic Growth team would be part of the piece of work to consider how best to engage with local businesses.

Adult Social Reforms

The Panel has been kept informed of significant changes in adult social care which have been proposed by the government. A significant change affecting adult social care had been due to be implemented in October 2023 but this had now been pushed back until October 2025. The main changes to the service would be its method of review by the Care Quality Commission. Regular inspection had not been a regular occurrence but this would change with a new inspection regime which had been due to start in April 2023. The adult social care service would be rated to be either adequate, inadequate, good, or outstanding.

The Panel agreed that written updates would be provided against the framework to allow scrutiny of how things were going in adult social care. This would allow the Panel to ensure that they had oversight of the reforms as they were implemented and could check progress on any future Care Quality Commission inspections.

Sunningdale Health Hub

NHS Frimley had plans to open a new health hub in Sunningdale and the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel took the opportunity to scrutinise the plans and speak to those at the NHS who were involved in bringing the project forward. The Panel considered the impact that the hub could have on other local GPs and whether the provision was suitable to meet the needs of the local community.

It is expected that the Panel will be kept informed of developments on the Sunningdale Health Hub in the next municipal year as the projects progresses.

Budget

Following the referral at the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel in December 2022, the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel were given the opportunity to scrutinise the budget lines related to the People directorate.

Key areas scrutinised included:

- The schools budget and whether this was adequate for all schools in the borough.
- Why there had been a loss in income from Hackney Carriage Licenses.
- The impact of the domiciliary care contract on the budget.
- Whether pressure on the budget was being felt in different geographical areas of the borough.
- Questioning the removal of non-statutory Family Hub services.

- Considering the financial implications should the number of children in care be increased.
- Understanding how the quality and provision of services would be affected by the savings being proposed.
- Noting that funding would be provided for ensuring that residents were able to thrive at home, rather than at hospital.
- Hearing the value of vital services for residents like Meals on Wheels.
- Clarification on proposed redundancies and how these staff could be redeployed elsewhere in the council.
- The cost of a new case management system.

Following the discussion at the meeting, the Panel agreed to make a couple of recommendations to Cabinet:

- It was recommended that Cabinet used £500,000 of funding from the additional budget settlement to remove the amount of savings required for the non-statutory Family Hub services and create a new growth bid of £20,000 for the Family Hubs to accommodate increasing demand for the service.
- It was also recommended that the savings line to 'move Meals on Wheels to a full costed model' of delivery was removed from the budget.
- Following the Cabinet meeting on 9th February 2023, both of these recommendations were noted and acted on by Cabinet. An additional £670,000 was allocated to the children's services budget to reduce the saving on Family Hubs by £400,000, while an additional £500,000 was allocated to Adult Social Care to allow for the removal of the saving related to Meals on Wheels delivery.

Resident Scrutiny Topic - Air Pollution

The second resident scrutiny topic considered by the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel was around the monitoring of air pollution around the borough and whether this was being done effectively. Officers agreed that the Panel would be informed of 2022 results to ensure ongoing monitoring, while also committing to three additional monitoring stations for PM10 and PM2.5. This would allow the council to consider data and make air quality decisions based on evidence. There were also proposals to use sensor equipment to monitor prevalence within the current five Air Quality Management Areas and then install high cost air quality monitoring units in two locations, should this be appropriate.

Task and Finish Group – Domestic Abuse

Following the adoption of the RBWM Domestic Abuse Strategy, the Panel decided to undertake a piece of work considering whether the strategy meet the needs and supported those residents who were victims of domestic abuse. The work would use a task and finish group format to speak with witnesses, formulate evidence and make recommendations which could then be considered by the Panel.

An initial meeting of the group took place in February 2023 and a way forward was agreed. The group would look to formulate a number of questions which could be used to ask the following groups:

- Survivors
- Perpetrators
- Dash Charity
- Thames Valley Police
- Housing
- Health

Due to the election, the work of the group was paused following this initial meeting and there are plans to resume the group in the 2023/24 municipal year.

Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Resident Scrutiny Topics

Two resident scrutiny topics were considered over the municipal year by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The first one centred around pollution of the River Thames and what the council could do about it. This was something under the remit of the Environment Agency and the Panel discussed the possibility of inviting representatives from the Environment Agency to speak to the Panel about what they were doing to prevent untreated sewage being released into the Thames.

The other resident scrutiny topic considered by the Panel focused on the River Thames Scheme and flood relief in Wraysbury. The council had initially been part of the scheme but had previously been removed after the required funding could not be provided. It was also noted that the channel section 1 scheme no longer existed so it would not be possible for RBWM to re-join the scheme even if the funding could be identified.

The Panel decided that an alternative project could be scrutinised, on the Datchet to Hythe End Flood Improvement Programme which was in the process of being developed by the Environment Agency and the council. The scope for this topic would be developed in the next municipal year and brought forward on the work programme once it was ready.

Call In

The call in mechanism has been used a number of times by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel over the course of the previous municipal year.

The Electric Vehicle Chare Point Implementation Plan was called in for consideration, as there was significant concern that the consultation had not been run on a completed draft of the plan. The Panel agreed to take no further action on the matter but agreed with officers that they would be sent the final draft of the implementation plan seven days before the public consultation commenced.

In January 2023, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered the South West Maidenhead Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document. The document had been called in due to issues around viability, infrastructure delivery and strategic placemaking. Following extensive discussion from the Panel and speaking to key officers and the Cabinet Member, the Panel decided that the decision had been made lawfully and that no further action needed to be taken.

The final call in of the year was on Maidenhead United Football Club's proposed move from their current stadium at York Road to a new stadium on land at Braywick Park. This was a delegated officer decision which had been taken by the Executive Director of Place Services. The main concerns of the call in signatories was around the lack of a full consultation, poor communication between interest parties and the impact of the loss of a significant amount of green open space for local residents. The Panel agreed to take action and decided to refer the decision back to the decision maker to reconsider the decision that had been made. The Panel recommended that the following concerns were taken into account:

- The date of the valuation for the lease of the site.
- Whether there was full consultation with the public on the proposals.
- Whether the length of time that the lease would last was appropriate.

The Executive Director of Place Services has referred the matter back to Cabinet to make a decision on, particularly given the change in political administration since the call in. This is due to be considered by Cabinet in July 2023.

Budget

Following the recommendation by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Panel was given the opportunity to scrutinise the relevant lines of the budget. Key themes and areas scrutinised included:

- Funding for Climate Partnership and the source of this funding.
- The high saving figure for the line-by-line review.
- Recruiting of teams in house.
- Public transport subsidies.
- Operational changes in parks across the borough.
- The £67,000 saving on parking subsidies.
- Cashless parking and the use of the RingGo app.
- Income opportunities across the Neighbourhood Services team.
- Contracts for boat hire on the River Thames.
- Waste operational changes.
- Place Service transformation programme.
- Bringing contractors in house.
- Funding for Parish Councils.
- Economic growth and events across the borough.
- Planning performance agreements.
- Tree maintenance and inspections.
- Fly tipping.

The Panel made a recommendation to Cabinet on the budget. This was for Cabinet to explore all schools in the borough which required funding for school crossing patrols, to consider whether this was a necessary saving.

Thames Valley Police Annual Presentation

A key part of the Panel's remit was around ensuring there was oversight of organisations involved in the Community Safety Partnership, including the police. The presentation allowed the Panel to hear information on the number of crimes investigated, contacts with the public and number of arrests made. Other areas explored included:

- Relationships with businesses in the borough and clamping down on shop lifting.
- Dealing with the traveller community.
- Using funding to provide further community wardens.
- Using the 101 service.
- Dealing with the night time economy.
- The relationship between the police and the CCTV control room.
- The approach to rural policing.

Street Lighting Project

The RBWM Youth Council had contacted the Panel to discuss their concerns about street lighting across the borough. The Youth Council attended a meeting of the Panel to present a report which outlined their concerns and this included locations of where they felt street lighting should be reviewed.

Officers and Panel Members agreed that these areas should be reviewed and a piece of work was conducted to investigate the areas raised. At the following meeting in April 2023, the Panel heard the outcomes from this work from the Head of Neighbourhood Services. Further meetings had been offered with the Youth Council to discuss any issues in specific locations, but it was noted that all street lights were installed and lit to national standards. Should it be required, the Youth Council could present further findings to the Panel and officers on areas that they felt needed to be investigated.

Improvements highlighted by Panel Members:

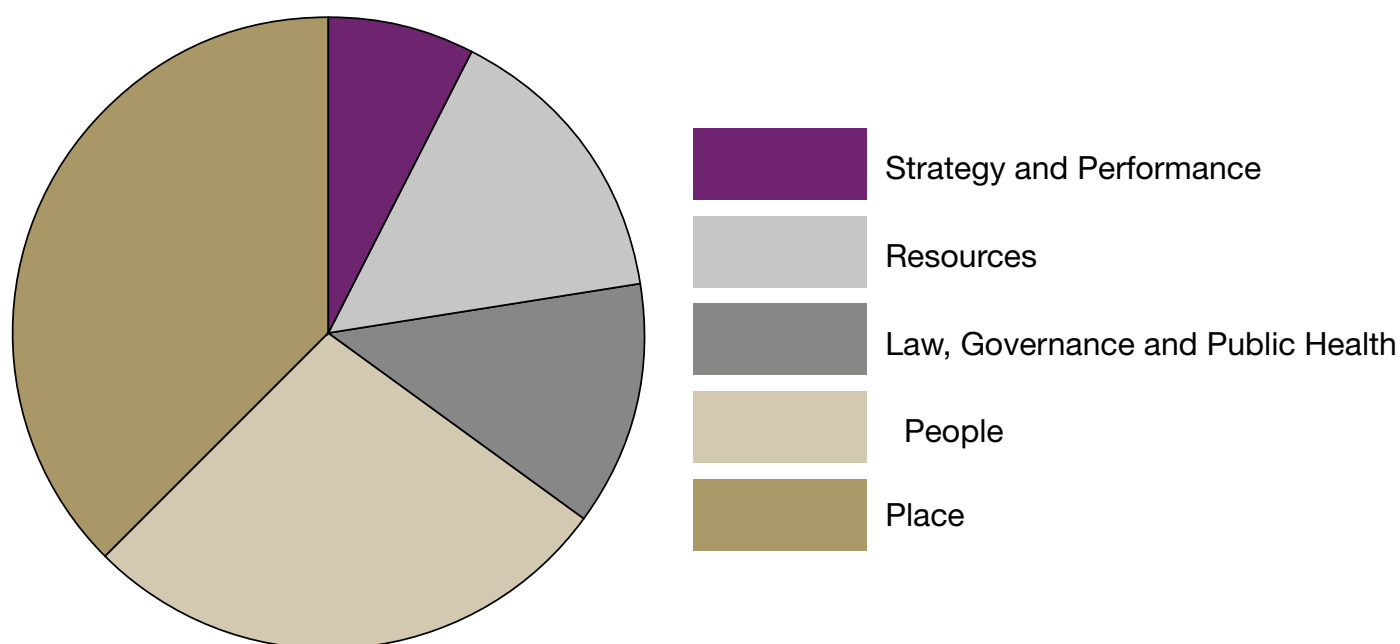
- The budget meeting had been a particular success, despite the meeting being lengthy. Information had been explored, scrutinised and recommendations had been made to Cabinet as a result.
- An opportunity could be explored to include residents feedback from the consultation as part of the budget scrutiny process.
- The project on street lighting which had been scrutinised in collaboration with the Youth Council was another success, the Panel were interested in working with the Youth Council again in future.



Overview and Scrutiny in Figures

	Corporate	People	Place
Number of meetings held	7	4	7
Total meeting time	17 hours 30 minutes	9 hours	16 hours 45 minutes
Number of substantive agenda items	16	11	9
Number of recommendations made to Cabinet	2	2	3
Number of call ins considered	2	0	3
Total number of YouTube views	980	577	1,337

A total of 40 different officers have been involved in Overview and Scrutiny meetings this year, split by the following directorates:



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You can get involved in the work of overview and scrutiny at the council in a number of ways:

- Attend a public meeting, either in person or via YouTube, of any of our Panels.
- Register to speak at a scrutiny meeting.
- Contact your local Councillor with your views.
- Suggest a topic for consideration by scrutiny [on our website](#).