

**AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber -
Town Hall - Maidenhead on Tuesday 26 September 2023**

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

Councillors Clive Baskerville, Adam Bermange, George Blundell, Mandy Brar, Catherine Del Campo, Alison Carpenter, Richard Coe, Suzanne Cross, Carole Da Costa, Devon Davies, Karen Davies, Jack Douglas, Jodie Grove, Geoff Hill, Mark Howard, Maureen Hunt, Lynne Jones, Ewan Larcombe, Sayonara Luxton, 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

Officers:

Stephen Evans, Elizabeth Griffiths, Elaine Browne and Kirsty Hunt

Minute Silence

Before the meeting started the Mayor lead a minute's silence to mark the anniversary of the passing of HM the Queen, Elizabeth II.

23. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley, Gosling and Majeed.

Councillor Wisdom Da Costa was in attendance virtually and took no part in the vote on any item.

24. Council Minutes

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 be approved, subject to the following amendment:

the final sentence of Councillor Bermange's comments at minute 22 re. Motion a) to read:

He stated that since the change the proportion of paper-based signatures had increased significantly and up to 86% of one example. He would be exploring the process with Democratic Services.

25. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bermange declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 8b) Motions on Notice relating to carbon zero concerns stating that although he was closely affiliated to the Climate Emergency Coalition he would approach the debate with an open mind.

26. Mayor's Communications

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

- attending the Royal East Berkshire Ploughing Match and Country Show
- visiting four different venues along the Cookham and Maidenhead Art Trail with 51 local artists displaying their craft and artwork
- presenting prizes at the Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum (WAMCF) Cricket tournament

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- watching the competition at Hurley Regatta and presenting prizes
- visiting Queens Court Care Home in Windsor for their summer fair and BBQ with a one-hundred-year-old resident who was part of the campaign group for the original outdoor swimming pool in Windsor
- visiting the Alma Road Centre which is now the long-term home of Windsor Homeless Project and the Churches Together Charities as they found out the extremely good news that they had achieved the national lottery funding
- watching some of the races at Maidenhead Regatta
- visiting the Guards Polo Club
- visiting the Sea Cadets in Stairwell Road in Windsor which was one of the oldest Sea Cadet units in Britain
- meeting a Gardens in Bloom competition winner in Dedworth
- joining Aktiveyes, a charity based in Maidenhead for the visually impaired, in a game of crazy golf blindfolded
- attending the opening of the Platinum Jubilee Fountain on Castle Hill, Windsor which enabled visitors to fill up their water bottles
- receiving a gift from former Mayor Christine Bateson as she presented the Council with a 'quaich' which is the Gaelic name for Scottish friendship bowl
- being photobombed at Legoland whilst visiting to understand their future plans and
- along with Deputy Mayor, Councillor Simon Bond attending the Ascot Relay for Life event

He concluded that he was pleased to be able to promote local charities and hoped that his colleagues had taken the opportunity to meet with Dingley's Promise who had been present in the foyer of Town Hall before the meeting started.

27. Public Questions

a) David Hilton of Ascot and Sunninghill ward asked the following question of Councillor Bermange, Lead member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management

Would the Cabinet Member explain the relevance of climate change when deciding the number of parking spaces to be provided in new developments?

Written response: *Climate change is caused by Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Transport is the source of about a third of the country's GHG emissions and different modes of transport give rise to varying levels of emissions.*

It is well recognised that ensuring modal shift away from the use of the private car is important for climate change mitigation, and there are a number of factors which impact on people's travel choices. These include the availability of public transport, provision of active transport infrastructure, provision of shared mobility options such as car clubs and the accessibility of local facilities. It is also well established that lower levels of readily accessible car parking (including physical availability, cost and convenience) are a push factor which can encourage more sustainable travel choices, particularly as part of a balanced approach where viable alternatives are provided.

The recent establishment of Active Travel England as a statutory consultee on planning matters, demonstrates the importance of planning decisions to enabling modal shift. Travel plans, submitted alongside planning applications, are an important way of communicating and facilitating alternative travel options.

Moreover, car parking has a significant impact on the urban environment. Avoiding overprovision of car parking enables greater allocation of space for other beneficial purposes such as increased leisure/recreational spaces, increased green spaces or sustainable transport infrastructure. This can lead to significantly better quality of the public realm and

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improved amenity for the public, including improved experience of walking and cycling, improved perceptions of safety, reduced noise, and improved air quality. Further many of these alternative uses provide greater opportunities for adaptation to the impacts of climate change, providing for additional urban greening, sustainable drainage and biodiversity opportunities.

Planning decisions must balance many different considerations, which are often unique to a site or location, however, ensuring that there isn't an overprovision of parking within developments, providing for the communication of alternative options and maximising the space available for other beneficial use serves an important role in both reducing GHG emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Mr Hilton asked by way of a supplementary question whether the emerging Parking Strategy would consider those who live in areas with poor public transport, who rely upon their cars and also on the vitality of visited destinations such as Ascot Centre where parking was crucially important.

Councillor Bermange replied that part of the Borough Local Plan includes a policy on active sustainable travel and talked about parking in the round with other areas including public transport. In his written response he had referred to the need to have both pull and push factors in changing and getting that modal shift to more active and low carbon forms of travel. He disagreed with the comment that climate change was the only consideration in the policies or the way officers were assessing these things. He considered they were taking a balanced approach. He agreed with the observation that public transport needed to be considered but having not inherited a particularly great financial position they were trying to invest where they could in public transport. He explained that as part of the process they could also use developer contributions under Section 106 to help with the infrastructure such as cycling, walking and public transport infrastructure as well as shared mobility car schemes.

b) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill ward asked the following question of Councillor Werner, Leader of the Council and Lead member for Community Partnerships, Public Protection and Maidenhead

It's been a mandatory statutory duty since 2021 for councils to protect licenced mobile park home residents by conducting fit and proper person assessment tests of their management, and by publishing a register.

When did RBWM first become aware of these mandatory statutory duties, and why has RBWM chosen not to comply with these two duties?

Written response: *The Council has been aware of the mandatory statutory duty since 2021 for councils to protect licenced mobile park home residents by conducting fit and proper person assessment tests of their management, and by publishing a register.*

Sadly, the previous administration didn't treat the creation of the proper persons register as a priority. Since the new administration has arrived, we have asked officers to treat this as a priority and they are currently reviewing the Caravan Site Licensing procedure which includes the FPP process. The policy will be published on the Council's website together with the Fit and Proper Persons Register in due course.

The situation at Strande Park is much more complex however as it involves many legal processes including the FPP register, planning issues, license issues and compliance issues. These legal processes are taking a long time which we are all finding very frustrating.

We do however need named witness statements to pursue many of these legal processes and I have told the officers to do everything they can to create a safe process for them to give their statements.

Mr Hill referred to the children living on the site who were forced to play around cars with no recreational ground despite the guarantee of the amenity in the site licence issued by the Council. He asked as supplementary question who did RBWM take to be the current active holder of the site licence with responsibility for the safety of those children, and when did they expect to restore access to their rightful recreation and playground.

In response Councillor Werner thanked him for his question and for his comments about Councillors Howard and Brar who had been fighting for these residents. He stated that the land to the east of Strand Park had been transferred into the ownership of a third party and the Council were currently seeking specialist legal advice in relation to the licensing issues at Strand Park. He stated that he thought this highlighted the problems caused by decisions made over the last 16 years by the previous Conservative administration. He reflected that 20 years ago the Council had officers with expertise in Park Home Estates but over the past 16 years this expertise had been stripped out and not replaced. He agreed that this had left some of the borough's residents in an incredibly vulnerable position. They were starting to sort out the mess left by the previous administration and had recently recruited someone with some experience of Park Homes who was starting imminently. They wanted the Council to get back to the position of being a champion for the residents across the whole borough rather than just looking after looking after developers. He concluded that he was sure they would be able to sort this issue out.

c) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill ward asked the following question of Councillor Bermange, Lead member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management

Last December the Government introduced binding 2040 air quality targets for PM2.5 micro-particulates which DEFRA states are "the air pollutant that causes most harm to human health".

Why is RBWM treating planning applications that demonstrate local breach of this 2040 target during their operational phase as being policy compliant, and by what practical mechanism will you meet the target?

Written response: *There is clear evidence that PM2.5 has a significant impact on human health, including premature mortality, allergic reactions, and cardiovascular diseases.*

In 2021, the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution for Windsor and Maidenhead in 2021 was 5.9%, above the average for England at 5.5%.

The Environmental Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 places a duty on the Secretary of State that, by 2040, the annual average of 10µg/m³ for PM2.5 should not be exceeded anywhere in England, and population exposure must be reduced by at least 35% compared with the 2018 baseline.

Whilst the national trend is that PM2.5 concentrations is moving in the right direction, having reduced by circa 32% between 2009 and 2022, more action is needed to meet the binding 2040 target, as well as the non-binding 2028 interim target of 12µg/m³.

Actions being taken by the Borough to improve Air Quality are clearly set out within Air Quality Annual Status Report. The latest ASR, published in June 2023, which includes specific measures relating to PM2.5 in response to the new legislation, is available on the Council's website at: <https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/home/environment-and-waste/environmental-health/air-quality-annual-status-report-asr>

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Within planning decision making, in appropriate circumstances planning applications are accompanied by Air Quality Assessments prepared by qualified persons. These assessments are considered by Officers within both the Planning and Environmental Health Teams, to ensure that the requirements set out in BLP Policy EP2 are met. That said, we recognise that this policy is weaker than equivalent air pollution policies adopted by some authorities; the London Plan, for example, requires an “Air Quality Positive” approach. As with a number of BLP policies we intend to keep EP2 under review.

The authority has not granted permission to any planning applications which it considers would result in a breach of the national 2040 target and does not consider that any non-policy compliant decisions have been made in that respect. It is important to recognise that, generally, the incremental impact of new development on PM2.5 levels is marginal, and the policy does not require planning permission be refused in such circumstances.

Mr Hill stated that OECD documents state that, despite their other benefits, heavy electric cars could pollute up to 8% more microparticles than conventional cars, because of greater wear and tear to brakes and tyres. He asked as a supplementary if Councillor Bermange would review the free parking scheme for electric cars and update planning guidance to insist upon the mandatory use of actual real-world PM2.5 measurements taken roadside at the proposed development site, and modelled through to 2040?

Councillor Bermange replied that Mr Hill had raised a really important point and that the move towards electric vehicles was not without its challenges. He agreed in relation to PM2.5 it was not primarily produced by combustion and emissions but rather by breaks wear and tire wear. He added that it was not all contributed to transport but also through the use of wood burning in homes which some people were moving to as a sustainable solution. He stated that he was not in a position to begin changing policy that evening but all policies were kept under review responding to an evidence-based approach. He reflected that the Council was in a good position in relation to air quality because the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel had established a task and finish group so were considering this issue. He concluded that under Council Rule C9.12 he proposed that the matters raised in the question was referred to the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further consideration.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Werner, Leader of the Council.

The Mayor confirmed that the Constitution did not require any further debate on the proposal and moved straight to the vote.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the matters raised in the question be referred to the People Overview and Scrutiny Panel for further consideration.

28. Petitions

There were no petitions submitted.

29. Councillors' Questions

a) Councillor Larcombe asked the following question of Councillor Coe, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

Please explain why the Wraysbury Drain is still blocked at Hythe End having been reported over four years ago?

Written response: *The Wraysbury Drain has been blocked for many years, in particular at Hythe End where homes and an industrial yard have been built across its path.*

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Sadly, in 16 years the former Conservative administration made extremely limited progress in restoring the channel as a whole and no progress at all in reinstating the channel in the vicinity of Hythe End.

The Council did undertake clearance of part of the channel at the Dive Centre in March 2022 and engagement and enforcement work is currently underway along another section where riparian owners have recently taken action to further clear the channel.

How planning consent has been acquired for property to be built across the course of a drainage channel is a question we are exploring with officers, with a view to seeing if there are any lessons to be learnt. We will also look at options for reinstatement of this section of channel such as diversion or culverting.

Further updates on work to reinstate and maintain the Wraysbury Drain are given by the council at the bi-monthly Flood Liaison Group.

Councillor Larcombe stated that he was horrified by the answer but not surprised. He considered the Council needed to do something as allowing someone to build on top of a watercourse 2.4m wide, a couple of meters deep that perhaps did not exist. A Flood Liaison meeting was scheduled for 11 October and he requested that Councillor Coe arranged for a report detailing what went wrong and offered options to put it right could be shared.

Councillor Coe answered that he did not know whether this could be achieved in that timescale, would ask and reply to him directly. Councillor Coe stated that he had similarly been surprised to discover about the properties as he'd assumed they had been there unlawfully but that was not the case.

b) Councillor Larcombe asked the following question of Councillor Jones, Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead member for Finance

With the ever-increasing probability of flooding, how much RBWM money has been allocated over future years towards flood defence and land drainage infrastructure maintenance and improvements please?

Written response: *The following items are currently identified as 'spend' in the capital budget in relation to flood defence and land drainage infrastructure maintenance and improvements.*

2023/4 CD54	River Thames Scheme Infrastructure Project	£400k
CI93	Highway Drainage Schemes	£300k

2024/5 CD54	River Thames Scheme Infrastructure Project	£450k
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Councillor Larcombe commented that Councillor Jones' succinct reply appeared to be short of money. By way of a supplementary question he asked about the £10m that had been talked about repeatedly over the years and more specifically the £53m that should have gone into the partnership funding for the River Thames scheme Channel One which was removed from the scheme.

In response Councillor Jones agreed that there was a possible £10m that had been spoken about but were working with the budget that was put in place in February. She explained that at that point the money had not been allocated. There was no further funding detail in the medium-term financial plan so that would need to be a negotiation going forward. In relation to £53m she did not recall that as a figure that was talked about but remembered a historic report mentioning £40m. She concluded that she was trying to unearth that report to review this but that figure never made it onto the budget sheets.

c) Councillor Story asked the following question of Councillor Bermange, Lead member for Planning, Legal and Asset Management

Planning permission for a new health centre to replace two GP surgeries in Sunninghill and Sunningdale was granted 18 months ago and residents are concerned that work has not yet started. Would the cabinet member advise Council on the reasons for the delay, when the work is likely to start and the likely opening date of the new health centre.

Written response: On 2nd March 2022, the Council's Development Management Committee resolved to approve the application for the new health hub, subject to an appropriate legal agreement being in place to secure planning obligations, namely an undertaking to secure a carbon offset contribution. This agreement has only recently been completed allowing a decision notice on the application to be issued on 20th September 2023. This is a welcome step forward for the long-awaited new health facility, however, the Council does not currently have any information from NHS Frimley Integrated Care Board, as developer, about their intended programme for implementation.

Councillor Story stated he had asked the question on behalf of the 16,000 residents who were patients at two very old GP surgeries: one in Sunninghill and the other in Sunningdale, neither of which meet NHS requirements. He reflected that it was good that the decision notice had been issued but it had taken a long time, 18 months. By way of a supplementary question, he asked if the relevant portfolio holder or the officers could find out when work on this new Health Centre was likely to start and when these two GP surgeries were likely to close.

Councillor Bermange advised that he had pre-empted this question and had spoken to Councillor Del Campo as the lead member with responsibility for health and also the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board. He explained that it was NHS Frimley ICB who were involved in the project which, he agreed, was long overdue. He confirmed that the Councillor Del Campo had asked for an update about the status of the project at the next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 10 October. He added that they had also asked for a report on other matters including the walk-in clinic at St Marks in Maidenhead which was another important issue for people. He concluded that they wanted to work with their partners in the NHS and the Health and Wellbeing Board was a good forum to do that.

d) Councillor Sharpe asked the following question of Councillor Reynolds, Lead member for Communities and Leisure

The Novello Theatre, one of the original cinemas in the country, is a highly valued gem in Sunninghill High Street. The community in Sunninghill wish to use this, now abandoned, facility for drama, dancing, singing and for cinema, to provide additional vitality to the area. What action is now being taken to return this facility to community use?

Written response: The Novello Theatre was returned to the Council following the surrender of the lease in June 2023. The building was originally built as a cinema in 1908 and subsequently extended when converted into a small theatre. It is directly next door to the Cordes Hall in Sunninghill – a community venue which hosts a range of events, productions and shows, many of which are similar in nature to the events that used to be held at the Novello.

Following the lease surrender handover inspection and detailed building condition survey, the Cement Particle sheets making up the flank wall have been found to have failed due to their age. The building is beyond its economic life and the subsequent cost to extensive refurbishment or new build would be approximately £1 million which we believe is prohibitive.

The Council is in the process of considering the appropriate option(s) for the property particularly given the challenging funding environment facing the Council. Once the feasibility options for the site have been concluded the Council will report on the proposed strategy.

Councillor Sharpe stated that the response was very disappointing for the community in Sunninghill and he noted that the Novello Theatre was one of the only buildings in the south of the borough which the Council owned. He said that his residents would love to have access to, and use of, the Novello Theatre so it was very disappointing to hear the state that it had got into. He asked by way of a supplementary question that as the Council had provided funding for Arts projects in Windsor and Maidenhead would the Council commit to a full review with the community for the opening up of the building to provide additional facilities which the community badly needed in the south of the borough.

In response Cllr Reynold replied that there was a significant cost to refurbishing or rebuilding a facility and the approximate £1m cost was completely out of bounds at the moment due to the significant financial pressures that had been inherited from 16 years of the previous Conservative administration and the £200m debt pile. He stated that they needed to take a serious look at the site and understand what it was capable of, to understand its best purpose and its best fit within the constraints of the resource that the Council had been given. He said that if a community group were to approach the Council to suggest taking over the site and buy it from the Council then this would be considered but no such dialogue had been had. He agreed that it was sad that the building had got into a state and that under their administration the property team would be briefed to ensure regular inspections were taking place which had not happened previously.

30. Motions on Notice

Motions a) relating to the name for the Forum relating to issues in Windsor

Councillor Carpenter introduced her motion which asked Council to consider amending the name of the Forum based in Windsor as it represented five wards in Windsor which were either fully or partly unparished with most residents living outside of the Town Centre. She explained that the feeling from the residents involved in the Forum was that 'Windsor Forum' sounded more inclusive than 'Windsor Town Forum'. She asked her colleagues to show that they were listening to their residents and support the motion.

Councillor Price seconded the motion but reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Sharp proposed a closure motion to move directly to the vote.

Councillor Carpenter summed up by saying that she had moved the motion in order to amend the Constitution to reflect residents' wishes.

Proposed by Councillor Carpenter, seconded by Councillor Price it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that

with immediate effect this Council recognises the wishes of the Windsor Town Forum's current membership to be known as 'Windsor Forum'.

Motion b) regarding writing to the Prime Minister about the impact of national changes on the local ability to meet Carbon Zero targets

The Mayor advised the meeting that the motion had been accepted under rule C6.2 and was therefore treated as a Motion without Notice under C13(s).

Councillor Karen Davies introduced her motion thanking the Mayor for allowing it to be added to the agenda as it was an important issue that could not wait. She explained that the previous week the Prime Minister had announced significant delays to the planned phasing out of

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diesel and petrol cars and gas boilers, and also scrapped commitments to make homeowners and landlords upgrade the insulation on their properties. Given that, in 2020, gas and other heating fuels in domestic use had contributed 29% of the borough's carbon emissions and vehicle usage contributed 33% of the borough's total carbon emissions, she was asking the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister to express their concerns at how this national delay would impact on the ability of local authorities to reach net zero carbon, and asking for an urgent renewed commitment to funding the improvements to electricity infrastructure necessary to enable residents, businesses and local authorities to make the necessary transitions to reach net zero.

She said that the national issue but directly impacted on the borough's residents, on businesses in the borough and on the Council's ability to reach its target of net zero carbon by 2050. Delaying the phased climate pledges was 'kicking the can down the road' for someone else to pick up. She stated that the administration was fully committed to the Council reaching net zero by 2050 at the latest they could only achieve this by working in partnership with communities, businesses and Government, and any watering down of the commitment from Government made it harder for them to achieve this.

She explained that the Social Market Foundation had estimated that private renters would pay £1bn a year more in energy bills because of the scrapping of proposals to make landlords upgrade insulation on their properties. Phasing was really important in the trajectory towards net zero and having adopted the Tyndall trajectory they were on course to achieve a 50% reduction by 2025, because carbon removed early was more valuable but noted it only got harder to keep achieving further reductions. She stated that the change was a U turn on pledges and abandoned the cross-party consensus which had benefitted this vital work over the last few years.

Councillor Reynolds seconded the motion stating that he was proud that the Council was on track to achieve a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of 2025. He stated that they needed government funding to support improvements to the energy infrastructure. In September 2022 RBWM had the fifth highest number of new electric vehicles registered across the country but a study a year before had shown that they were the sixth worst local authority for electric vehicle charging infrastructure. He was looking forward to the Electric Vehicle Charging Point procurement paper being considered at the next month's Cabinet meeting. He concluded that they needed the commitment from government to ensure that local authorities could still reach their committed goals, aims and objectives. He asked colleagues to help leverage their power as a Council to lobby the government to do the right thing.

Councillor Sharpe acknowledged that climate change was important but thought the focus should be on getting on with making changes and did not think the letter would do any good.

Councillor Julian Tisi noted that the Prime Minister had made multiple backtracks on environmental commitments that were vital if the UK was to meet its targets of Net Zero by 2050. He stated that none of changes would help those struggling against the cost of living crisis for example generally the poor don't buy new cars and despite the Prime Minister's claim that this would result in lower costs the opposite was true. He commented that they needed to move away from fossil fuel reliance so that people were less exposed to price hikes dependent upon global factors beyond control. The Independent Office of Budget Responsibility had estimated that the cost of not hitting net zero would be double the costs of reaching it. He observed that these changes would lead to uncertainty in manufacturing with planned investments in the production plants to meet the previous 2030 target which would push off investment and reduce credibility on the government. He explained the abandonment of nutrient neutrality rules which required developers to ensure that excess nutrients were not released into rivers and streams was not just a national issue or far in the future. Within the Eton and Castle Ward they had seen an example of the impact of this issue locally as the Eton and Wick Waterways Group had been clearing the weeds out of streams during the summer.

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Together with Councillors Wilson and Devon Davies he had joined the local volunteers literally in the river clearing out weeds which had caused flooding of the meadow and part of the village but the weeds would come back if there were excess nutrients here and in rivers around the country.

The Mayor requested brevity within the debate and that contributions were focused on the motion.

Councillor Moriarty added that it was such a shame that just as society was starting to get behind the idea of the climate emergency that something so public and so prominent might dampen that now. He was worried about small businesses within the borough explaining that scope three within the Environment Social Governance standards meant that corporations would have to demonstrate not only their own environmental credentials but those of their whole supply chain. He reflected that it was the sorts of organisations that were at the recent Maidenhead and Windsor Business and Community Awards that would have their opportunities clipped if the Council was not able to support them in meeting their own climate targets in their own climate infrastructure. He considered it was important to demonstrate to residents that the Council would not let something like this be ignored and they'd keep fighting to support them and their own business opportunities.

Councillor Del Campo commented that one of the reasons that was often given for dialling back on clean technology was that it is prohibitively expensive and whilst it was true that it is currently much more expensive to buy an electric car than a petrol one this was because it was an emerging technology which only became affordable when it became mainstream.

Councillor Coe observed that residents in Datchet, Horton and Wraysbury were on the front line of climate change as their homes would get flooded more frequently as rainfall increased as the flood alleviation they needed had not been done. He observed that climate change was not an abstract idea in a distant future as it was seen in the weather, in the bushfires in Australia and America, in flooding in Bangladesh, stronger hurricanes in the Caribbean and increased rainfalls in the UK. He reported that he had regular conversations with the environment agency that the extra capacity put in by the Jubilee River was getting used up by increased rainfall and the flood evaluation for areas around the river would move and properties that had been protected would move back into a position of being vulnerable. He considered that another few years would be lost instead of the Prime Minister taking action now.

Councillor Wilson commented that in his adult lifetime the average surface temperature had increased nearly one degree from 16 degrees to 16.96 degrees driven by greenhouse gas emissions now referred to as carbon emissions. He said that they needed to heed the warnings and act now.

Councillor Price commented that it was for her grandchildren and what was being bequeathed to them which frightened her. She stated that they should be doing absolutely nothing to make it worse and should be striving to do more than they were currently doing because she feared for what they were going to live through.

Councillor Reeves noted that the Council's Highways contracts were being linked to CPI and inflation was struggling to come down which would mean that the value of the road improvements available to the Council was lessening by the day. He asked that the letter include support for additional funds to support the Council's highways improvements such as cycle lanes, cycle routes plus fixing the large number of potholes and the increasing deterioration in the roads. He stated that increased PM 2.5 from brakes and tire condition was obviously impacted by rough roads. He proposed to add to the letter that funding to actually improve highways and particularly cycle lanes and cycle routes was a more active way to achieve the target of Net Zero by 2050.

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The Mayor clarified that rather than being an amendment to the motion being debated it was a proposal for inclusion in the content of the letter and this was accepted.

Councillor Bermange observed that when referring to Net Zero 2050 the year 2050 was getting nearer and nearer but it still felt like a fair way in the future and the policy that it would 'be alright on the night' did not stand up to scrutiny. He explained that as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008 it is not just about getting to Net Zero by a certain date but about having the five-year carbon budgets which set a trajectory in order to get to Net Zero. He continued that what was being suggested was to shallow that curve now with a steeper curve later but too much carbon could have been emitted by then causing the climate to hit breaking point.

Councillor Hunt stated that she was delighted to hear that they were still going to hit the target by 2050 and sticking to the target of reducing emissions by 68% before 2030. Since 1990 the carbon emissions from electricity generation had fallen by three quarters, the proportion of electricity generated by renewables like wind and solar had grown to around 40 percent in the last few years up from just over 10 percent a decade ago, so she reflected that the government were doing things. Buildings account for about 17% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions mainly due to burning fossil fuels and the government had committed to installing 600,000 heat pumps a year by 2028 to replace the gas boilers. She noted that the government was offering grants of £5k to help homeowners in England and Wales to install heat pumps which were three times more efficient.

Councillor Brar contributed that as Chair of Licensing Panel that they had spoken about taxis converting to electric or hybrid cars by 2025 / 2030 do this was a backtrack and she supported the motion.

Councillor Jones raised concerns with electric cars, battery charging and disposal looking to the future as she could not see how this would be coped with. A stop / start approach to net zero does not work for big business, reduced investor and developer confidence which increased the cost of capital and overall cost of decarbonisation.

Councillor Taylor requested if Councillor Werner would add to the letter to ask the Prime Minister to start looking now at funding grants to cover the increased costs for things such as electric vehicles and servicing heat pump boilers. She reflected that more development needed to take place for the safety and affordability of electric vehicles. Residents were keen but it was too expensive so they would need help.

The Mayor confirmed with Councillor Werner that this was an accepted edition to the letter to be drafted.

Councillor Howard added to Councillor Taylor's comments but focused on the skills gap to achieve the environmental goals. There were currently fewer people able to help support a air source heat pump than a gas boiler. He requested that Councillor Werner asked that funds were requested from the Prime Minister to help people train, to build knowledge and help people participate.

The Mayor confirmed with Councillor Werner that this was an accepted edition to the letter to be drafted.

Councillor Karen Davies summed up the debate by saying that she thanked members for their support, especially for Councillor Reeves', Councillor Taylor's and Howard's suggestions for inclusion in the letter to be drafted. She reflected, in response to Cllr Hunt's remarks, that the government's claim that the UK has done better than other countries on cutting emissions was based on decarbonisation carried out decades ago, not under the current government. Emissions cuts measured from 1990, and the UK's dash for gas, which displaced coal for power generation in the 1990s and 2000s, delivered a large share of the roughly 50% fall in carbon emissions since then. Under the current government she observed that while

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emissions from power generation have continued to fall, those from transport, homes and farming had remained high. She concluded that whilst their opposition may or may not make any difference to the national government she felt this was a serious issue on which the Council needed to make a stand.

A recorded vote was requested.

Motion b) (Motion)	
Councillor Neil Knowles	For
Councillor Simon Bond	For
Councillor Clive Baskerville	For
Councillor Adam Bermange	For
Councillor George Blundell	For
Councillor Mandy Brar	For
Councillor Catherine del Campo	For
Councillor Alison Carpenter	For
Councillor Richard Coe	For
Councillor Suzanne Cross	For
Councillor Carole Da Costa	For
Councillor Devon Davies	For
Councillor Karen Davies	For
Councillor Jack Douglas	For
Councillor Jodie Grove	For
Councillor Geoff Hill	For
Councillor Mark Howard	For
Councillor Maureen Hunt	Abstain
Councillor Lynne Jones	For
Councillor Ewan Larcombe	For
Councillor Sayonara Luxton	Abstain
Councillor Siân Martin	For
Councillor Chris Moriarty	For
Councillor Helen Price	For
Councillor Gary Reeves	For
Councillor Joshua Reynolds	For
Councillor Julian Sharpe	Abstain
Councillor George Shaw	For
Councillor Gurch Singh	For
Councillor Kashmir Singh	For
Councillor John Story	Abstain
Councillor Helen Taylor	For
Councillor Amy Tisi	For
Councillor Julian Tisi	For
Councillor Leo Walters	Abstain
Councillor Simon Werner	For
Councillor Mark Wilson	For
Carried	

The motion was therefore carried.

Proposed by Councillor K Davies, lead member for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Windsor Town Council, seconded by Councillor Reynolds it was

RESOLVED that

the Council agrees to ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister to express our concerns at how this national delay will impact on the ability of local

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authorities to reach net zero carbon, and asking for an urgent renewed commitment to funding the improvements to electricity infrastructure necessary to enable to enable residents, businesses and local authorities to make the necessary transitions to reach net zero.

Closing remarks

Before closing the meeting, the Mayor asked the meeting to join him in welcoming Councillor Walters back to the Council Chamber.

The meeting, which started at 7.00 pm, ended at 8.23 pm.