

**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.

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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

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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.

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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.