

# Public Document Pack

## 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 10 October 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    | <b>Apologies for Absence</b><br>To receive any apologies for absence  |       |
| 2    | <b>Declarations of Interest</b><br>To receive any declarations of interest  | 3 - 4 |
| 3    | <b>Public Questions</b><br><br>Please note public questions are permitted at Extraordinary meetings of the Council where such a question is directly related to an item on the Agenda.<br><br><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> |       |

|   |  |        |
|---|--|--------|
| 4 | <p><b>Update on Council's current financial position</b></p> <p>To consider the update on the Council's current financial position provided to Cabinet on 27 September 2023 and the following motion:</p> <p><i>This Council supports the actions being taken by the Cabinet and senior leadership team to reduce the financial deficit facing the Council and agrees all councillors need to take responsibility for ensuring the Council does all it can to increase its financial sustainability.</i></p> | 5 - 10 |
|---|--|--------|

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](mailto:kirsty.hunt@rbwm.gov.uk), with any special requests that you may have when attending this meeting.

Published: Monday 2 October 2023



## 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.



**RBWM financial position:**

- 1. Update on budget pressures**
- 2. Actions required to rectify**

Extraordinary Council  
 October 2023

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**Forecast in-year (2023/24) and 2024/25 position**

**Current year – 2023/24**

- Forecast in-year position for 2023/24 (at month 5) shows an overspend on service budgets of £7.3m.
- Available in-year contingency of £3.3m and forecast underspend on non-service budgets reduces net overspend to £3.6m.
- General fund reserves currently at £10.2m - this would reduce reserves to £6.6m, which is below the minimum requirement set by s151 Officer.

**2024/25 forecast budget gap**

- Process for setting 2024/25 budget continues, with current gap at £6.2m.
- Intensive work in train to bring this down, with draft budget report to Cabinet in November.
- Scale of gap for 2023/24 and 2024/25 puts RBWM at risk of having to issue a Section 114 notice unless further urgent and significant action is taken.

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## Causes of increasing budget pressures (1)

### Higher than budgeted inflation costs

- Inflation has continued to remain higher than expected, for longer.
- Impacts all areas of council spend - increases costs of goods, services, premises, transport and utilities.
- In total, higher than budgeted for inflation has added a £1m pressure to large contracts in the Place directorate.

### Level of council debt and rising interest rates

- Increasing interest rates have increased the cost of council borrowing.
- Currently, the council's total borrowing stands at £203m.
- Borrowing costs (including MRP) are forecast to reach £8m this year and £14m in 2024/25 (interest of £10.8m and MRP of £3.5m).

### Increasing cost of adults and children's social care

- As well as demand for care increasing, the cost of social care (adults and children's) is also increasing which is adding a total pressure of £5m in 2023/24.

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## Causes of increasing budget pressures (2)

### Rising demand for and complexity of statutory services

- Demand is increasing for a range of statutory services including temporary accommodation; referrals to children's services and adults needing complex social care.
- Older people client numbers are 36% more than budgeted, causing a £2.7m overspend against the adult social care budget in 2023/24.
- Number of people receiving mental health support is 56% over budget, creating a pressure of £1m in 2023/24.

### Difficulty in recruiting social workers and delivering agency savings

- Recruitment of children's and adult's social workers made more difficult by RBWM salaries compared to neighbouring boroughs which has led to increased reliance on higher-cost agency placements.

### High risk savings

- 2023/24 budget included £5.76m of savings which are rated as 'red' in terms of deliverability. Increasingly likely that not all of these savings will be achieved, adding a £2m pressure to the budget.

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## 2023/24 M5 Summary

### MONTH 5 FORECAST OUTTURN

|                 | Budget        | Forecast<br>over (under)<br>spend | Prior month<br>variance | Change     |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|
|                 | £'000         | £'000                             | £'000                   | £'000      |
| Adults & Health | 39,999        | 4,880                             | 4,635                   | 245        |
| Children's      | 27,758        | 215                               | 270                     | (55)       |
| Place           | 11,672        | 2,976                             | 2,526                   | 450        |
| Resources       | 12,300        | (792)                             | (718)                   | (74)       |
| CEX             | 959           | 33                                | 0                       | 33         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>92,688</b> | <b>7,312</b>                      | <b>6,713</b>            | <b>599</b> |

### SAVINGS

|              | RAG   | £'000           | %           |
|--------------|-------|-----------------|-------------|
| Total        | Red   | (2,040)         | 19%         |
|              | Amber | (4,012)         | 37%         |
|              | Green | (2,603)         | 24%         |
|              | Blue  | (2,269)         | 21%         |
| <b>Total</b> |       | <b>(10,923)</b> | <b>100%</b> |

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## Actions needed to reduce the deficit (1)

1. Service challenge sessions to go through forecasts, pressures, opportunities line by line. **In progress**
2. Removal of budget lines which have historically underspent. **In progress**
3. Review all earmarked reserves to help in-year position. **In progress**
4. Establish a Spending Control Panel to control all non-essential spend, including recruitment. **Go live October**
5. Reduce agency staff costs. **In progress**
6. Maximise income from discretionary fees and charges. **In progress**
7. Explore opportunities to maximise external funding. **In progress**

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### Actions needed to reduce the deficit (2)

8. Review all services to develop proposals for transformation. **In progress**
9. Review capital programme to determine which schemes can be deferred, re-phased or stopped to reduce borrowing costs and maximise use of CIL/S106. **In progress**
10. Review Treasury Management Strategy. **In progress**
11. Review all council assets to maximise income and look at options to sell assets to reduce borrowing where it makes financial and strategic sense to do so (final decisions taken by Cabinet). **In progress**
12. Formally write to and meet partners and contractors to identify ways of reducing costs. **In progress**

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### Implementing a Spending Control Panel

- Used by other councils to control non-essential spending.
- All new non-essential expenditure over a certain threshold - even where budget provision is in place - will require SCP approval before goods and services can be ordered or new staff can be recruited (temporary and permanent).
- Business case submitted to SCP setting out justification for expenditure; why it represents best value; and implications if not agreed.
- SCP to remain in place until a demonstrable improvement in the council's finances is shown.
- To go live early October, meeting weekly.
- ToR and guidance to services being developed.

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### What do we mean by essential spending?

- Spending relating to a clear and referenceable statutory obligation such as adults and children's social care; or regulatory and legal requirements such as health and safety.
- Urgent spending needed to safeguard vulnerable people.
- Spending already legally or contractually committed, such as staff pay and pensions; spending through existing legal agreements or contracts; and payments for goods/services already received.
- Spending entirely funded through ring-fenced or external grants.
- Spending which improves the council's financial position e.g. permanent recruitment to replace more expensive agency staff or one-off spending which delivers ongoing savings.

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