

**AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Desborough Suite -
Town Hall on Monday, 19th June, 2017**

PRESENT: Councillors The Mayor (Councillor John Lenton), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Eileen Quick)

Councillors Christine Bateson, Malcolm Beer, Hashim Bhatti, Phillip Bicknell, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, Stuart Carroll, David Coppinger, Wisdom Da Costa, Simon Dudley, David Evans, Dr Lilly Evans, Jesse Grey, David Hilton, Charles Hollingsworth, Maureen Hunt, Richard Kellaway, Philip Love, Paul Lion, Sayonara Luxton, Asghar Majeed, Ross McWilliams, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Nicola Pryer, Jack Rankin, Samantha Rayner, Colin Rayner, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Derek Sharp, Julian Sharpe, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John Story, Claire Stretton, Lisa Targowska, Leo Walters, Simon Werner, Derek Wilson, Ed Wilson and Lynda Yong.

Officers: Andy Jeffs, Mary Kilner, Russell O'Keefe, Alison Alexander, Karen Shepherd, Jenifer Jackson, Kevin McDaniel, Helen Murch and Robert Paddison

141. ONE MINUTE SILENCE

A one minute silence was held in remembrance of the victims of the Grenfell Tower disaster.

142. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors N. Airey, M. Airey, Alexander, Burbage, Clark, Cox, Diment, Gilmore, Hill, Ilyas, Jones and Sharma.

143. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Monitoring Officer made the following statement:

As the Monitoring Officer and having invited as well as consulted with individual Members in the matter of any disclosable personal interests that would affect their decision making this evening, I have determined in accordance with the provisions of Section 33 (2) of the Localism Act 2011 to grant a dispensation to all those members who would otherwise have a personal interest by virtue of simply residing in the Borough, being therefore no different than any other member of the public living in the borough. This dispensation will not apply to the following Members who have disclosed a pecuniary and potentially prejudicial interest. The Members concerned are Councillor Colin Rayner and Councillor Samantha Rayner.

The next matter I need to address is the question of pre-determination on the part of any of the Members. Having reviewed the provisions of Section 25 (2) of the Localism Act and case law, and in particular, having considered the comments and views that have either been expressed or alleged to have been expressed by individual Members, I have concluded that there has been no pre-determination on the part of the Members here tonight. I believe that there has been a legitimate pre-disposition as opposed to a pre-determination. I have sought reassurances from those Members where they have expressed their views and they have reassured me that they have

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retained an open mind when coming to the meeting this evening to listen to the debate and views of fellow Members before making their decision on the approval of the Borough Local Plan. It is important that all members (representing their residents) are able to ask questions and debate the Borough Local Plan at the meeting this evening. It is very much in the public interest that the Members are able to fully engage with their residents and tonight transmit those views and raise any questions before they make their final determination on the Borough Local Plan.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Dudley, announced that at a private meeting earlier that evening, the Conservative Group had discussed a report proposing an increase in the budget for the expansion of Lowbrook School. He had not taken part in the debate or vote on the matter. The proposal had not been agreed by the Group, however it had been decided that in the interests of transparency a report would be presented to the meeting of Full Council scheduled for 27 June 2017. The debate would end with a free vote on the matter for all members of the Conservative group, including the members of Cabinet.

Councillor Dudley also stated that the debate on the Borough Local Plan would end with a free vote for all members of the Conservative group, including the members of Cabinet.

The Mayor confirmed that there was no scope for discussion of the Lowbrook item at this meeting. Councillor Brimacombe commented that he felt it would have been appropriate to enable Ward Councillors to respond to the statement in relation to Lowbrook.

Councillor Colin Rayner explained that his interest and that of his wife Councillor Samantha Rayner, as referred to by the Monitoring Officer, related to his family's land holdings and land trusts in the borough.

144. BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Councillor Colin Rayner, having declared an interest, made representations to the meeting before the debate began. He had been elected as a Parish Councillor in 2003 and the Borough Local Plan (BLP) had been discussed at Horton Parish Council for nearly 10 years. His first meeting upon being elected a Borough Councillor in 2005 had related to the BLP. In December 2012 officers visited Horton Parish Council and gave options for the village. This was debated by the parish council and feedback given to the Borough. Some of the recommendations were accepted, some were not. He had advised his local residents of the consultation via the parish council website, Wraysbury News and in emails. The consultation had also been advertised in Around the Royal Borough and in local newspapers. A thorough process had been undertaken to reach this point. Councillor Rayner explained that he had three children who would one day like to buy a house in the borough; therefore there was a need to build somewhere in the borough. Even if sites were approved in the BLP, each application would still have to go through the planning process. Councillor Rayner stated that he had never been bullied by any other councillor. He took pride in representing Horton and Wraysbury and would not be bullied into making a decision that was harmful to his community.

Councillor Samantha Rayner, having declared an interest, made representations to the meeting before the debate began. She highlighted that the BLP allowed the

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council to control its own destiny. There was a desperate need for housing for the young and people who wanted to work locally. The BLP was a unique chance to define what was meant by affordable housing. As Lead Member she would ensure that Regulation 19 would be put into all libraries. She had also asked the Managing Director and Councillor Bateson to visit all the parish councils to talk about Regulation 19. The CSC would be able to take comments by phone. Every time the council received a written response from the public it would write back to explain the process.

Councillor D. Wilson proposed an amendment to recommendation ii, to correct a typographical error:

- ii) Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Place in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning *to make* final editorial and formatting amendments to the Borough Local Plan and supporting documents that (taken together) do not materially affect the policies set out in the borough Local Plan.

Councillor D. Wilson explained that the council could make a real difference to the future needs of the residents in developing a Borough for everyone to provide housing, employment and leisure facilities for everyone to enjoy. This BLP started work following the rejection of the previous submission in 2007 on the grounds of not reviewing the Green Belt boundaries and where sustainable growth could take place throughout the borough and, in particular, Maidenhead with the advent of the Crossrail project. Over the last ten years the council had been preparing and providing the evidence to back-up the plan moving forwards to the Regulation 19 process. The plan started in 2013 and ran through until 2033 where the council could take into account buildings that had already received planning consent, but had yet to be built as the Objectively Assessed Housing Need was to provide 712 dwellings per annum, equating to 14,240 dwellings over the plan period.

In 2015, the council carried out a call for sites to ask landowners and developers to come forward with sites that could meet that housing growth. Each site was assessed and those considered appropriate in planning terms were consulted upon during the Regulation 18 process, from 2 December 2016 through to 13 January 2017. There was no minimum period of consultation, but it ran for 6 weeks as it was over the Christmas period.

The council would be able to meet the Government target in full, 100%, within the boundaries of RBWM. Therefore, the proposal was to use Brownfield sites, previously developed sites within the Green Belt, and to look at existing boundaries on the Edge of Settlements to provide this housing growth. Amending the boundaries in this manner would mean that only 1.5% was taken out of the Green Belt. Therefore retaining and protecting 81.5% of the existing Green Belt until the end of the plan period of 2033. Currently, young adults could not get onto the housing market as they would need 12.5 times their annual salary to even afford a home of their own in the borough. This could not be right, so the council needed to build houses and apartments with a range of tenure schemes to allow this to change.

He knew that this may be unpopular with some residents, but it was happening in every borough up and down the country as the population increased. The council must do something to address the lack of provision over many years previously. If the council did nothing, as some would suggest, the Department of Communities and

Local Government (DCLG) and the Planning Inspectorate would step in to take over the planning service and would write their own plan without consultation. The council could not continue to discuss the plan, it was needed to move forward on to the next stage and could not go backwards. The plan had been checked by counsel to ensure it could proceed to the next stage. The plan was robust to deliver the housing and employment growth for the borough, provide new schools for young people, to enable young adults to take the step of getting onto the housing ladder locally and to facilitate with the Clinical Commissioning Groups to provide the necessary healthcare provision to meet the demand. Regeneration proposals in Ascot and Maidenhead were in place to create vibrant communities and a New Leisure facility at Braywick. Infrastructure would happen as new developments were proposed and received planning consent. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan was a constant evolving document as individual sites were master-planned for development they would provide the necessary Infrastructure as part of their development proposal.

This BLP was to provide the platform for 'Building a Borough for Everyone' and Councillor D Wilson asked Councillors to agree to the process to move forward to the consultation on the technical and legal soundness of the plan, which would run from 30 June through to 25 August 2017 with submission to the Secretary of State in October 2017. He thanked all Members who had been part of the process in developing the plan going forwards and to the officers within the Planning Policy Unit working long hours in gathering evidence and preparing for the Regulation 19 document. He proposed the recommendations as amended.

Councillor Werner commented that house prices were a concern but sadly there was nothing in the document to resolve the issue, for example affordable housing. He had bought his first property at four times his then salary. There was not a chance that someone now would be able to buy on four times their salary. The council used the 80% theory but it was misleading to call this affordable housing. Key worker schemes in other areas had reported that only the headteachers could afford to buy a property; the teachers and social workers could not. He felt the highways infrastructure proposals were lacking in detail and did not consider a number of pinch points in the borough such as Cannon Lane in Cox Green or Switchback Road South in Furze Platt. At the last minute the council had added in a number of Green Belt sites and then consulted over the Christmas period when people had other things to focus on. It was also misleading to say 6000 responses had been received as these were not individual responses. Most responses had been ignored anyway. The Green Belt was precious and should only be given up when the people of Maidenhead would really benefit. It was not local people or their children would benefit. There was no truly affordable housing, it would create gridlock on the streets and fill up the schools. The alternative was to go back to the beginning and properly consult with residents. The government had offered some funding to help with a consultation, they were not about to step in and take over.

Councillor Hilton commented that the Neighbourhood Plan Group had stirred up the issue in the south and other parts of the borough that the statutory BLP policies overrode Neighbourhood Plan policies and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan had been 'destroyed'. No reasons given by the Lead Member or Planning Manager would alter their view on this matter. The Group had sought to delay Regulation 19. Councillor Hilton highlighted that every site in the south of the borough identified in the BLP, with the exception of one site of 10 dwellings, had been promoted by the Neighbourhood Plan. The obligation to increase development density had come from

central government. The Neighbourhood Plan Group had objected because the number of dwellings was larger than they wanted, but this was dictated by government policy. The number of homes in the ward was set to increase by 25%, which was roughly the growth predicted by 2033. There were a number of significant sites that would need to be the subject of significant consultation. This process was in place for the rejuvenation of Ascot centre. The BLP brought significant potential, in particular the golf course site which was in the council's control. This would ensure the full involvement of residents in developing ideas for the site. In the south the council was not the landowner therefore a different route was needed.

The Neighbourhood Plan Group had told him to vote against the BLP or resign, however this was not the only group he represented. In December 2016, 250 people had attended a consultation meeting on Ascot rejuvenation. All filled in a survey which indicated that people wished for homes to be built for their children and grandchildren to be able to afford to buy. It was a difficult decision for Councillors but he would support Regulation 19 as he felt it was right to do so.

Councillor Walters stated that the most important character of the Green Belt was its permanence and openness, to prevent urban sprawl. The policy had stood the test of time. He did not like the draft BLP as he felt it was not the council's plan but was being imposed by central government. If the council did not meet the Objectively Assessed Need level it was threatened with the plan being found unsound, legal challenges, and being put into special measures if more than 10% of planning appeals were lost. Nobody knew what need meant – was it demand or aspiration? There were a million possibilities for brownfield sites in south east England. Residents would understand the dilemma the government was putting the council in; preaching localism while dictating on the other hand. Under the provisions of the Planning Act 2004 the plan would be more binding than previous plans, and if land was not shown in the plan for development, it would not be developed. He had been fighting for the Green Belt for 50 years and there had never been such pressure from central government. He would not be able to support the draft plan.

Councillor Da Costa explained that he and the other independents were concerned about the flawed process, including late and missing reports. The agenda pack had been available for six days but one element had only been published the day before and there were some missing documents. He highlighted that the plan included building on flood zones 3A and 3B and that air quality was a significant issue. There would be a loss of soil resource for food production and recreational pressures. The lack of consultation meant that evidence to support the plan was incomplete and in some cases inaccurate. Transport providers had told him that the council had not performed its duty to co-operate. Nearly all the borough's Neighbourhood Planning Groups, parish councils and residents objected. Churches he had spoken to, who understood the community's emotional, social and practical needs, had commented that they did not recall receiving an invite to the consultation. The council had received significant funding since 2011 for Neighbourhood Planning but in the main had ignored the work of these groups. In Windsor 50% of policies had been defined as strategic, overriding the neighbourhood plan. The DCLG said it would help to integrate comments from the groups. Residents wanted the council to listen to them and put forward the best BLP, with the help of the DCLG. The lack of options meant that he would have to reject the proposal.

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Councillor Yong commented that there was a need for housing for young people and those who wanted to work in the borough. She highlighted that the poorest in the community were often in private rented accommodation. Rents had increased by 10% each year for a number of years, which could not be sustained. Those who were evicted because they could not afford the increase were forced into house shares, back to parents or became homeless. Radian had no housing stock available. Smaller properties needed to be built and this required careful planning by the borough.

Councillor Bateson explained that she had been involved in developing the BLP for a number of years; much officer time had been put in. Since 2014 consultation had been undertaken with residents, statutory bodies, and neighbouring authorities. Officers had attended parish meetings and Neighbourhood Plan Groups and pop-in sessions had been held. Only 1.5% of Green Belt was to be released whereas there could have been a full Green Belt boundary review. New transport modelling had been brought in and was nearly complete; this would help to inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Infrastructure needs were very difficult to assess until planning applications were submitted. The OAN of 712 had been imposed by central government due to a national shortage of housing. If the plan was not approved, the DCLG would step in and re-write it. She wanted to ensure her residents in Sunningdale got a stable and managed BLP.

Councillor McWilliams highlighted that young people who had voted in the recent election had grown up in the shadow of the financial crisis. The average house price in London and the South East was £633,000, 12 times the average salary of £53,000. If the BLP was not approved, there would be no housing in the pipeline to ensure affordable housing was provided. Any delay would squander the hopes of a generation and also those on the housing register. He believed the BLP was the best way to provide affordable housing, giving hope to his generation and life changing potential for many people in the borough.

Councillor Sharpe explained that he was part of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in the south of the borough and was aware of the enormous amount of activity to identify appropriate spaces in the local areas. There was enormous talent in the community and it was a travesty that this was being ignored. There was huge pressure from the government to deliver housing need however this was a breakdown of the localism agenda. The council needed to take a step back and review the proposals.

Councillor D. Evans commented that Councillor Walters, who had spent 50 years defending the Green Belt, had commented that this was a difficult decision. He respected the fact the Councillor Walters would vote against the proposals but he would know that those who voted for the BLP were not doing so because they wanted to build over the Green Belt but because they felt it was the most effective way of defending the 81%. As Lead Member for Maidenhead Regeneration he highlighted that residents had put together the vision for Maidenhead town centre in 2011. Since then the government had changed the rules and turned the screw on local authorities to deliver housing. In Maidenhead the majority of identified sites were on formerly developed sites in council control. The council needed to look at what was affordable in the borough and consider if residents and taxpayers would be prepared to subsidise housing. If building only took place on brownfield sites this would represent 65% of OAN and the plan would fail. Bracknell and Wokingham had both already had their assessed need increased at appeal. If the plan failed, developers would come forward with plans in areas residents would not want to see developed.

Councillor Sharp explained that many of his residents had contacted him to object to the BLP as set out. All accepted that some housing was needed but not at the saturation levels proposed. Residents did not want their local environment to change. Over the past 6 years he had been proud to be a part of a council that benefited residents; this had been achieved by listening to residents. The council needed to listen again. He had been elected to represent those who lived in the borough, not those who wanted to live in the borough. He requested that the council revisit the plan and formulate a BLP that was acceptable to those most affected, the residents. He was aware that not approving the plan risked the government riding roughshod over the council and formulating its own plan, but residents held the ultimate weapon, the vote.

Councillor Grey commented that borough officers had been employed and barristers consulted to ensure the council got the plan right. There was a definite need for the right mix of housing, including affordable housing. Councillors had to consider the whole picture, there would be a gradual increase in infrastructure over time. Development Management Panels would assess each application. Only 10% of the land in the borough was developed, the plan proposed just a 2% increase to provide much needed housing as a legacy for the future. House prices were 15% higher than other areas because of a lack of housing. Key workers could just not afford to live in the borough. Some unrecognised groups had attempted to bully and intimidate councillors, he was happy to report that no parish council had been part of this.

Councillor Story explained that he had received many responses as part of the consultation from individual residents as well as local groups. Three concerns had been raised. The first concern was that the council did not have to submit a plan meeting the government's housing target. The legal advice was clear, that the submission of a plan that did not meet the target would be a high risk of challenge from developers, landowners and neighbouring authorities and the borough would end up having more development rather than less. The second concern was that the council had not consulted properly. This was a legal question as the council had a legal duty to consult. Based on the best legal advice, the council had been advised it had consulted properly. The third concern was whether the council was doing everything it could to protect the Green Belt. The main Green Belt site in his ward was Ascot Station. No objections had been received but residents in neighbouring wards had said that development on the Green Belt in their areas was excessive and that the council should have considered a Green Belt review. He was concerned that if the whole process was started over with a Green Belt review and intervention by the DCLG, this could delay or halt the application for a new hospital at Heatherwood, which was in the Green Belt. The recent change in the national political scene could result in different targets therefore there was a strong argument to get on with the plan with the targets currently in place.

Councillor Pryer explained that regulation 18 had included site HA11 with a density of 650 dwellings. Ward councillors had distributed leaflets and set up a public meeting to discuss the proposal. It was clear that 650 was seen as too high. In Regulation 19 this had been reduced to 450. If the area was not allowed to be developed young people and key workers would have no homes available. All sites would be subject to the full planning process when an application came forward. She believed the proposed BLP would protect the Green Belt for the next 20 years.

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Councillor Brimacombe commented that it was a marginal decision. He had received lots of emails telling him the plan would be unsound even if building was taken to the maximum, because of insufficient consultation and a lack of industrial capacity. He was not convinced that the majority of houses would go to the children of residents. A number of policies at central government needed to be aligned for the whole system to work, including relating to the private rented sector and social housing.

Councillor Stretton commented that a petition of over 1600 signatures had been received. She agreed that the draft was a bad plan. The last plan failed because the council did not undertake a Green Belt review and it had still not done one. She had been told that there was now no choice because time had run out. This was not true and the Lead Member had wasted the year's extension given and not done a proper job. The council's duty to cooperate on delivery and infrastructure support had been rushed and were incomplete. The Local Plans Working Group (LPWG) which reviewed the process mysteriously stopped meeting a year previously and there were no meetings detailed or minutes on the website since that time. She asked the Lead Member to explain why this was the case. She had concerns that the recommendations meant there would be no further debate or ongoing scrutiny before submission to the Inspector. It appeared the council had only just started the process with Highways England and there were no detailed plans included to show how the council would deal with the issues identified. In her opinion it was highly likely that the plan would be found unsound, not only on the duty to cooperate and consultation. The public accepted there was a need for more housing but did not agree this was the way to do it; she agreed. The DCLG had offered funding for a technical support package to unlock the blockage between Neighbourhood Plans and the BLP. This had been blocked by the Leader. The Leader had also said he would write to the Secretary of state if the plan was not approved, but he did not have the authority to speak on behalf of the council. Councillor Stretton stated that she could no longer support what was going on and it was with deep regret that she would be resigning from the Conservative Group.

Councillor E Wilson commented that residents had been surprised and shocked by the numbers allocated to the HA11 site, leading to anxiety and concern in the community. Some residents thought demolition would occur straight away, some thought the council had paid developers and many were unaware of the IDP, which was a very technical document. A lot of the documents had good intentions but were technical planning documents which were difficult to read or understand. Residents needed facts not spin. He would be writing to all his residents to explain what the BLP would mean to them. All councillors shared a responsibility to ensure residents understood as much as possible. It was important to not just use social media, but sit down and listen to concerns.

Councillor Smith commented that a common complaint was that the plan was a wish list, but at this stage it was not possible to give details of infrastructure, this was the role of development management at a later stage.

Councillor Dr L Evans commented that it was with a heavy heart that she was trying to work out the right decision. She was used to having all the facts before making a decision. The plans were only as good as the vision going forward. Ascot and Cheapside had an ageing population. Over the last 17 years, year on year, the population over 60 in the ward had increased by 4%. At the same time the population aged 24-40 had decreased by the same percentage. There was therefore a shrinking

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base able to contribute to the working environment, and an increasing need for healthcare and homes for the elderly. She commented that Runneymede had presented a plan to the Inspector meeting 86% of their Objectively Assessed Need. No other local authority had been willing to take on their excess need, therefore the Inspector returned the plan and they had to start the process again. A garden village had since been imposed on the borough including 25,000 dwellings in the Green Belt.

Councillor Kellaway stated that he was 100% behind the BLP. The borough was a major economic region and the council had responsibilities in this respect. The borough had taken in 11,000 people in the last ten years, another 5,000 would need homes if Heathrow was to expand. The plan did not reflect the importance of the borough in terms of the economy, in fact there was less employment land than previously.

Councillor Bhatti commented that there was a real need for housing but the BLP was never going to please everyone. All sites would still be subject to the planning process. HA11 was initially allocated 650 dwellings, which had led to resident concerns including the loss of two garden centres, however this had been reduced to 450 on the draft plan. If the plan was not approved the increased cost to the council and the intervention of the Secretary of State could put the council in a worse situation. He therefore believed the plan before Members was the best option the council had.

Councillor Beer commented that he had been an active member of the LPWG, but the group had gone silent a year ago. He was not aware of any meetings in the last year. He had been looking further to the future and had spent a lot of time campaigning against Heathrow which would tear up the plans before Members tonight as it would require a further 5,000 houses. The council was not doing much about Heathrow, which he felt was disgusting. Heathrow was making the north/south divide worse; something needed to be done to turn that around. The Housing White Paper and the National Planning Policy Framework were currently under review and given the pressure on housing it was likely they would open the gates further, therefore a decision was needed tonight. The triangle site was a disaster because the actual planning policy on employment sites would have to be reviewed. The affordable housing requirement had not been addressed. The assessed need was 434 units per annum, 57% more of the housing allocation. However the plan only talked about 30% where there were more than 10 dwellings being built. There were problems in getting teachers and other essential staff therefore something basic was needed in the plan including rented housing and social housing. There was enough land in the borough to do deals with the Housing Associations.

Councillor Beer proposed an amendment to add an additional recommendation as follows:

'Further comments and suggested amendments should be encouraged during the 8 week Section 19 consultation period. Adequate resources should be provided to promptly fully list responses on the website and schedule them with recommended actions in line with government consultation policy and Development Management Panel reports, which should be circulated in adequate time for the LPWG to review, confirm or amend alongside clause (iii) action prior to submission original submission version of the BLP to the Secretary of State.'

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Councillor Beer commented that the consultation list on the website gave some of the observations made, but what happened to them, who decided and how they were decided was not clear. These should be made available.

The Chairman explained that the Monitoring Officer and the Planning Officer had looked at the amendment proposed by Councillor Beer and advised that it was not appropriate or legal to accept the amendment.

Councillor Quick commented that if everyone was asked what they would like to see in the plan, every single person would come up with something slightly different. It been a difficult process to get to the point today and it was a difficult decision before councillors. People who went into local politics did so because they wanted to improve the lives of residents and not for personal wishes of power. She had lived in her Ward all her life, there were no areas in her ward identified for development because it was already well developed. To be a borough councillor an individual had to either live or work in the borough therefore she highlighted why would any councillor wish to agree to something that was harmful to their own homes and families? She encouraged people to respond to the consultation on Regulation 19.

Councillor Hunt explained that 99.2% of her ward was in the Green Belt, so the only way to have development was by rural exception site; such sites were detailed in the Neighbourhood Plan. There was one site allocation for 100 houses. She had worked with many in the ward including the parish council on the Neighbourhood Plan, which had been submitted to the borough in draft in February 2015. The plan had included the site as public open space, it was now unfortunately allocated for 100 houses. It was a difficult time for both councillors and residents as what was wanted and what could be had were very different. Officers had been very open and helpful. A quid pro quo had been suggested for a retirement village site recently given planning approval, but unfortunately this had not been accepted. The BLP should not only be about housing. She questioned why industrial sites such as Grove Park had been taken out. The borough could not just be a commuter area for London.

Councillor Richards commented that the process had already been long and any delay risked the power being taken away from the council. The need for housing was very clear. The housebuilding rate in 1971 was 300,000 per annum but this had dropped to 150,000 per annum by 1991 and had stayed at that level. Councillor Richards explained that he and his siblings between them had had 13 children, so his parents who had first moved into the borough had multiplied to 21 people. This was the reality for the need for more housing. He would vote proudly for the plan.

Councillor Majeed stated that the BLP in its current form needed to be stopped because it would be thrown out by the Inspector. Residents were not against building or affordable housing; they just wanted a BLP that would complement the borough and keep the character of its towns and villages. The Regulation 18 consultation had come out over Christmas when people were focussed on their families. The response was just 1% of residents; the majority of responses were from developers. There was a section in Appendix F that referenced consultations that had not been carried out, for example highways modelling. He understood that the plan had been changed earlier in the year, such as in relation to the garden centres, yet there had been no consultation. He asked how it was possible to go from Regulation 18 to Regulation 19 with completely different documents? He asked whether all options, including satellite

villages had been considered? He felt that no plan was better than a bad plan. The voices of residents had not been heard. The request to ask questions at the meeting had been denied and an e-petition with over 1600 signatures had been rejected.

Councillor Hollingsworth stated that in his six years at the council he had mainly been involved in children's services issues therefore his knowledge of planning was minimal. However, he was aware that the image of the planning department had not been high. The previous plan had been rejected because neighbouring councils said they had not been consulted. Given that, he expected that the plan before Members would have been robust in terms of the amount of time allowed. It should be about quality not quantity in terms of consultation. In all these matters perception was a reality and the perception he had was that the council had not properly consulted. In terms of affordable housing, if the BLP could bring the salary multiplier down from 12 times then he would be all for it but he did not believe it could achieve this. Councillors had been told it was a take it or leave it situation; this was not in the best interest of democracy.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that, in relation to the amendment put forward by Councillor Beer, it was not legally possible to amend the submission in the manner proposed by the amendment.

Councillor Saunders commented that as part of the consultation in 2014 on the 23 items he, as the then Lead Member, had facilitated 15 local resident groups meetings with meaningful debate encouraged and rigorous analysis of each site. Every single local group that had wanted to had been given the opportunity for rigorous debate. In the Regulation 18 consultation 7 of the 23 sites had been removed because of resident feedback. Those lobbying for further consultation and delay overlooked a number of points. The borough had not undertaken a Green Belt review, which would involve a review of the whole of the Green Belt for development. All councillors had a mandate to do the opposite, and it would likely generate more Green Belt release than proposed. Some neighbouring councils believed the borough should take more of their housing need. Developers would aggressively challenge every aspect of the plan. The borough therefore needed a BLP with absolutely clear definitions. The proposals offered a range of affordable housing. The council was investing tens of millions of pounds to offer significant discounts on affordable housing. The need for housing would continue to rise significantly.

Councillor Bicknell thanked all the residents for attending the meeting. He understood it was an emotive subject and councillors wanted to do their best by their residents; it was not possible to please all the people all of the time. It had been along process and the council had tried hard to listen to residents. Officers had been both pushed and questioned.

It was proposed by Councillor D. Wilson, seconded by Councillor Bicknell and:

RESOLVED: That Council:

- i) Approve the Borough Local Plan and associated Sustainability Appraisal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)) for publication under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and subsequent submission to the Secretary of**

State for independent examination under section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- ii) **Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Place in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning final to make editorial and formatting amendments to the Borough Local Plan and supporting documents that (taken together) do not materially affect the policies set out in the Borough Local Plan.**
- iii) **Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Place in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning for the preparation and submission of a schedule of proposed changes to the Regulation 19 Local Plan which are recommended by statutory consultees and/or considered by officers to be necessary that (taken together) do not materially affect the policies set out in the Publication Local Plan.**

(33 Councillors voted for the motion: Councillors Christine Bateson, Hashim Bhatti, Phillip Bicknell, John Bowden, Clive Bullock, Stuart Carroll, David Coppinger, Simon Dudley, David Evans, Dr Lilly Evans, Jesse Grey, David Hilton, Maureen Hunt, Richard Kellaway, John Lenton, Paul Lion, Philip Love, Sayonara Luxton, Ross McWilliams, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Nicola Pryer, Eileen Quick, Jack Rankin, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John Story, Lisa Targowska, Derek Wilson, Ed Wilson and Lynda Yong. 10 Councillors voted against the motion: Councillors Malcolm Beer, Paul Brimacombe, Wisdom Da Costa, Charles Hollingsworth, Asghar Majeed, Derek Sharp, Julian Sharpe, Claire Stretton, Leo Walters and Simon Werner)

145. CONTINUATION OF MEETING

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That, the time being past 10pm, Members agree to continue the meeting to transact the business as detailed on the agenda, as per Part 2C Paragraph 25 of the constitution.

146. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on item 5 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.