

AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber - Guildhall, Windsor on Tuesday, 12th December, 2017

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor John Lenton), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Eileen Quick) Councillors Alexander, Bateson, Beer, Bicknell, Bowden, Carroll, Coppinger, Cox, Da Costa, Diment, Dudley, Gilmore, Grey, Hilton, Hollingsworth, Hunt, Ilyas, Jones, Kellaway, Lion, Luxton, McWilliams, Mills, Muir, Rankin, C. Rayner, S. Rayner, Richards, Sharma, Sharpe, Shelim, Smith, Story, Werner, D. Wilson, E. Wilson and Yong.

Officers: Andy Jeffs, Mary Kilner, Rob Stubbs, Alison Alexander, Karen Shepherd, and David Cook

205. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Airey, N. Airey, Bhatti, Brimacombe, Burbage, Bullock, Clark, D. Evans, Hill, Love, Majeed, Pryer, Saunders, Sharp, Stretton, Targowska and Walters.

206. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meetings held on 26 September and 30 October 2017 be approved.

207. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors C Rayner and S Rayner declared interests in the item 'Hurley and the Walthams Neighbourhood Plan – Formal Making of the Plan' as landowners potentially affected by the Plan. They left the room for the duration of the discussion and vote on the item.

208. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

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

209. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- a) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill Ward asked the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

RBWM has been investigating the Conservative party leaflet's incorrect statement that "both garden centres no longer form part of the BLP". Why did RBWM officers not (as a precaution) use, e.g., official Twitter and Facebook accounts before the election to issue a simple statement of objective fact in accordance with paragraph 16 of the recommended code of practice?

Councillor Dudley responded that Paragraph 16 of the recommended code of practice was "permissive" not "mandatory" and the Monitoring Officer (having considered the position in relation to the Purdah) took the view that any corrective statement could have involved RBWM in further debate regarding the leaflet, which could potentially be

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

seen as influencing public opinion. The Monitoring Officer decided therefore to refrain from issuing specific statements in relation to the leaflet.

Mr Hill posed a supplementary question but the Monitoring Officer ruled that it did not relate to the original question and was therefore not answered.

- b) Andrew Hill of Boyn Hill Ward will ask the following question of Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

Datchet Parish Council passed a motion (17.083) on 11.9.17 requesting "a copy of the legal advice received by RBWM immediately prior to the extension and change in terms of the RBWM BLP Regulation 19 Consultation". As of 27.11.17 the Clerk had not received it. How many months will RBWM be taking to give the Parish their requested information?

Councillor Dudley responded that prior to the submission of Mr Hill's question the Head of Law & Governance personally advised the Clerk to Datchet Parish Council on Monday 27 November that the Parish Council would not be given the requested information on grounds of legal professional privilege.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Hill stated that on 25 July 2017 Councillor Dudley had said, in the interests of transparency that the legal advice would be published on the website. In September at Datchet Parish Council Councillor Grey proposed a counter motion not to ask for a copy of the legal advice. Did Councillor Dudley believe it was in the interests of the residents of Datchet not to see the legal advice?

Councillor Dudley responded that it had been his desire to release the advice in the interest of transparency but following advice from the council's QC it could not be released on the basis of legal professional privilege.

210. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

211. PANEL MEMBERSHIPS

On behalf of the council, Councillor Dudley congratulated Councillors Mike and Natasha Airey on the birth of their daughter Helena Joy Airey.

Councillor Dudley explained that Councillor Cox had stepped down from the Cabinet to focus on his successful career and young family. Councillor Grey had therefore been appointed as the new Lead Member for Environmental Services including Parking and Flooding. As a result, Councillor Cox was proposed to Chair the Licensing Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

It was proposed by Councillor Dudley, seconded by Councillor Bicknell and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Councillor Cox be appointed as Chairman of the Licensing Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

212. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Members considered the results of a recent public consultation into proposed changes to the council's scheme. Councillor S. Rayner explained that the borough was committed to helping those who struggled financially by reducing the council tax bill through the scheme. The borough gave the 90% maximum relief to working age applicants, compared to 85% in Slough and 75% in Reading. Since 2013 the scheme had been determined by councils. The DWP and DCLG continued to make changes. The report therefore brought together changes since 2016 so the borough's scheme was in line. It would assist the administration of the scheme and avoid confusion between national and local schemes. It would not affect residents of pensionable age who would continue to receive up to 100% council tax relief. The council had powers to give financial assistance to anyone who suffered hardship as a result of changes. As part of this a consultation was carried out via the website, libraries, housing benefit counters and flyers with council tax bills. 64 responses were received, 35% of which were from people who were currently in receipt of support.

The changes proposed were:

- Backdating claims would be limited to 1 month rather than the previous 6 months. It was estimated that up to 5 people would be affected
- Allowances would be provided for the first two children in the family only when calculating support. It was estimated this would affect up to 11 people
- Removal of family premium. It was estimated that this would affect up to 15 people
- Employment support allowance. It was estimated up to 5 people would be affected
- Severe disability premium. This would be aligned with the new rule under universal Credit.
- Each year DWP and DCLG altered the rates to calculate support and the council wished to do the same

The council would use its powers to provide mitigation to anyone who would be affected. All staff would be trained to assist residents.

Councillor Dudley highlighted that the Conservative administration had a lower contribution rate than the two Berkshire unitary authorities run by Labour.

Councillor Jones asked, of the 45 councils that had a contribution rate of 10% or less, how many were Conservative and how many were Labour. Councillor Dudley agreed to provide this information to Councillor Jones in writing and the response to be added to the website.

Councillor Werner commented that the proposal was punishing vulnerable people and that therefore he felt Councillor Dudley was a hypocrite. Councillor Dudley asked for Councillor Werner to withdraw the personal slur. Councillor Werner responded that he apologised that he felt Councillor Dudley was a hypocrite. Councillor Dudley stated that he accepted the apology.

It was proposed by Councillor S. Rayner, seconded by Councillor Dudley and:

RESOLVED: That Council:

i) Notes the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken with regard to the proposed Council Tax Support scheme.

ii) Approves the proposed changes to the 2018/19 Council Tax Support scheme with effect from 1 April 2018.

(38 Councillors voted for the motion Councillors Alexander, Bateson, Beer, Bicknell, Bowden, Carroll, Coppinger, Cox, Da Costa, Diment, Dudley, Gilmore, Grey, Hilton, Hollingsworth, Hunt, Ilyas, Jones, Kellaway, Lenton, Lion, Luxton, McWilliams, Mills, Muir, Quick, Rankin, C. Rayner, S. Rayner, Richards, Sharma, Sharpe, Shelim, Smith, Story, D. Wilson, E. Wilson and Yong. 1 Councillor voted against the motion: Councillor Werner)

213. HURLEY AND THE WALTHAMS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - FORMAL MAKING OF THE PLAN

Members considered making the Hurley and the Waltham's Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Councillor Bateson explained that if approved it would be material in decision making for relevant planning applications in the area. It was the second of ten Neighbourhood Plans in the borough and had started its journey through various community consultations. The independent examination had been carried out based on written representations. The examiner's report recommended it should proceed to referendum subject to some modifications. In July 2017 Cabinet approved the plan to go to referendum, at which over 50% of the community said 'yes' to the plan. The last stage was Council adoption. Councillor Bateson thanked Councillor Hunt, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, the parish councils, and all the volunteers involved.

Councillor Cox paid tribute to his fellow ward councillor and the people she managed to galvanize to get the report together. There were three parish councils and a parish meeting in the area. Councillor Dudley echoed these comments; he stated that Councillor Hunt was a true community champion.

Councillor E. Wilson also echoed the thanks. He felt it was an excellent planning document that fitted neatly between the national planning framework and what people looked for locally. The plan concentrated on policies and local matters. If the Lead Member considered it to be an exemplar document, he asked how she would ensure all the other groups would be made aware.

Councillor Hilton commented that the Neighbourhood Plan in the south of the borough had done exactly what it was meant to in adding granularity. He congratulated all involved in the Hurley and Waltham's Plan. He highlighted the need to set the expectations for the role of the Neighbourhood Plan Group once the plan was adopted and to make it clear that once adopted, the plan passed to councillors and officers to use in taking decisions on planning applications.

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

Councillor Coppinger commented that it was superb that a number of communities came together to prepare the document. He was particularly pleased to see the inclusion of affordable housing for local people.

Councillor Bateson confirmed that completed plans were always sent to the other Neighbourhood Plan groups to look at and discuss.

The Mayor added his congratulations; he was pleased to see the parish councils working together.

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson, seconded by Councillor Coppinger, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

- i) That the Council make the Hurley and the Waltham's Neighbourhood Plan part of the Development Plan for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.**
- ii) Delegates authority to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Principal Member for Neighbourhood Planning, to make minor, non-material, amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan prior to its publication.**

(Councillors C Rayner and S Rayner left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item)

Councillor Dr L Evans joined the meeting at 8.08pm.

214. ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD ELECTORAL REVIEW - STAGE TWO: WARDING PATTERNS

Members considered proposed warding patterns based on the future council size of 43 Members from May 2019. Councillor McWilliams explained that the review was required because a number of wards were either over or under represented, and Oldfield itself would trigger a review as it was 39% above the average. The Working Group had been reconstituted for the second stage of the process and had met between September – November 2017. It had been made clear from the start that the Working Group wanted officers to consult with all Members; the majority of councillors had been able to discuss their community interests as a result.

The review had three criteria:

- To deliver electoral equality
- To reflect community interests and local identities
- To promote effective and convenient local government

To ensure community interests were reflected, a 10% tolerance was allowed which provided some flexibility in boundaries. The review had also included electoral forecasts related to building development in the borough. The proposed warding patterns were:

- 22 Councillors in Maidenhead: 11 wards of 2 Members

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

- 21 councillors in Windsor: 5 wards of 3 members and 3 wards of 2 Members

Councillor C Rayner highlighted that he had represented Horton and Wraysbury since 2005 and his family had farmed the area since the 17th century. He knew the community better than a mathematician at the Boundary Commission. Horton and Wraysbury had many links whereas there were few to Datchet. He said that all children in the ward went to school in Wraysbury, the area shared the River Colne and a number of footpaths. He questioned what would happen to the Horton and Wraysbury Neighbourhood Plan and the Horton and Wraysbury Character Assessment after the split. He advised that the distance from Horton to Datchet was 10 miles; it would end up being the longest ward in the country. He believed the review had been done in good faith but it was not all about the mathematics. A number of people who lived in the area were not on the electoral role and had not been included in the calculations. However, people who did not yet live on the golf course site in Maidenhead had been included.

Councillor Jones stated that the review worked for Maidenhead and some of central Windsor but not for rural Windsor. She highlighted the criteria of the need for effective and convenient local government. The boundaries proposed for Old Windsor would mean less effective government. Trying to merge large areas meant community representatives may be deterred from standing for election. The proposals were being made when the extent and location of new developments were not yet clear; the Borough Local Plan had yet to be submitted. A reduction to 47 councillors instead of 43 would allow identities to be maintained and still achieve a significant reduction.

Councillor Hilton stated that the figure of 43 Councillors had already been accepted. No other person or organisation was better qualified to make recommendations to the Boundary Commission than the councillors in the room. In the south of the borough it was proposed to have two wards of three Members each, which reflected the situation back in 2001. In the view of local councillors this did not provide the optimal solution and ignored the role of the parish council in local government and also ward councillor interactions. It was the collective view that three wards of two councillors would be better as ward councillors would then be able to work with just one parish council. The proposal would be above the 10% threshold but this had been accepted by the Boundary Commission in other areas. The representation had been made to the Boundary Commission and was supported by both parish councils. He was broadly supportive of the proposals so given the representation had been made, he would support the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Dudley commented that Councillor C Rayner was a community champion and had spoken well. He highlighted that the decision would be a free vote. He congratulated all councillors involved in the process including the Leader of the Opposition. He thanked the officers, in particular the Electoral Services Manager and Policy Officer.

Councillor Werner stated that he welcomed the rewarding in Maidenhead and the reduction in the number of councillors. He thanked the Councillors and officer involved for ensuring Pinkneys Green remained united. He had concerns about the power of the executive in a smaller authority. He also asked for assurance that there would not be a sudden increase in Councillor allowances, which would negate the benefit of cost savings proposed. Councillor Dudley responded that it would be appropriate for whoever lead the council after the 2019 election to have a smaller executive to

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

represent pro rata the smaller number of councillors. Allowances did tend to increase in line with staff salary increases. As long as he was Leader of the Council he would not recommend any allowance increases as a result of the amended number of councillors.

Councillor S Rayner explained that Eton Wick and Eton were linked by the town council. Eton College was a large landowner in both wards. She believed the two areas should stay together. The proposed change would be impractical for ward councillors who would have to go to two parish council meetings, one town council meeting and one resident's group meeting every month.

Councillor E. Wilson congratulated officers and Councillor McWilliams. The working group had tried many permutations especially in the rural parts of Windsor and northern Maidenhead. It was very difficult to take 57 representations and get something all would agree. Inevitably some would be disadvantaged. For Horton and Wraysbury, he suspected the communities would continue to exist after the change. The only difference would be there would be two ward councillors. He doubted if residents would notice any difference in their daily lives. The opportunity was for the council to be more focussed in trying to deliver services to residents. 57 Councillors were not needed to achieve this.

Councillor Grey commented that at a local level he did not like the proposals for Datchet, however he understood that the Boundary Commission could come in and carve up the borough and the situation would be worse. Datchet Parish Council had made a submission, supported by himself and his fellow ward councillor. Councillor C Rayner had made some good points but the Boundary Commission did not look at communities, it looked at numbers. Councillors needed to consider the wider picture when voting.

Councillor Jones commented that the term 'carve up' was a misleading statement as there were three equal criteria considered by the Boundary Commission.

Councillor Da Costa highlighted the three criteria used. He believed there was an error on the figures as they did not include some developments such as the squash club. The Borough Local Plan had not yet been submitted. The proposals did not work for Windsor. West Windsor had two distinct communities: the ancient Clewer village and Dedworth. The proposals split both and forced together two distinctly different communities together.

Councillor Alexander commented that it was good news that there would be no single member wards in future. The numbers for the original proposal keeping Eton and Eton Wick together unfortunately did not add up, therefore the ward boundary was extended to Eton End. The final version also included Datchet and Horton. He was at a loss to understand how such diverse communities related although the numbers did add up. Eton and Eton Wick had submitted a proposal directly to the boundary commission.

Councillor Bateson explained that when she started as a councillor, the ward had been South Ascot and Sunningdale, and it seemed this arrangement would return in the new proposals. When it had changed before, there had been no difference because all were residents of the borough.

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

Councillor Cox commented that he and Councillor Hunt represented a very diverse ward yet the communities were able to work together. It had been a difficult and thankless task and he thanked Councillor McWilliams and officers for their efforts. He commented that when groups were considering their candidates for the next local elections, it would need to be made clear that all councillors would need to work hard regardless of the ward they represented.

Councillor Richards commented that the issue was challenging. He would take into account all the comments made and issues raised.

Councillor Beer commented that he would like to have proposed an amendment to 47 councillors but understood this could not be done as the decision had been taken less than 6 months previously. However he felt that 47 would fit in with most people's concerns. The proposed reduction in the number of panels and meetings would not necessarily reduce the workload as these panels would just be busier. He had a number of concerns about representation if Old Windsor was amalgamated with Horton and Wraysbury. The ward was unique in that it bordered Heathrow and contained three motorways. The proposed boundaries would stretch all the way to Virginia Water, which was enormously different in character. It would be very difficult for three councillors to serve and represent such a diverse community. Old Windsor was very different and deserved a higher ratio of representation. In six years' time councillors would have 49% more residents to represent which would increase the workload enormously.

Councillor Quick understood there were individual concerns but borough councillors represented all residents. When knocking on doors during a campaign, many residents did not know their ward or who represented them. Sociologists and anthropologists believed a mix in a community was a good thing.

Councillor Bicknell commented that it was impossible to please everyone otherwise the numbers would not work. The reality was that the inspector would decide. Members should vote for what was right for the whole borough.

Councillor McWilliams explained that a number of options were considered in the rural Windsor areas; the proposal was the best option to maintain the Etons being together. He had asked for unanimous agreement from the Working Group for the ward patterns, based on a figure of 43. The south of the borough had submitted an excellent representation however one of the wards would be 15% below the variance therefore could not be agreed. He would work with Councillor Carroll to look at ways to make it easier for councillors to participate in meetings in future. In relation to development, the boundary Commission would only consider sites expected to be developed by 2023.

It was proposed by Councillor McWilliams, seconded by Councillor Bicknell, and:

RESOLVED: That Council:

- i) Agrees that the Royal Borough's representation on the new warding patterns, Stage Two electoral review report, be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.**

(29 Councillors voted for the motion Councillors Bateson, Bicknell, Carroll, Coppinger, Cox, Diment, Dudley, L Evans, Gilmore, Hilton, Hollingsworth, Hunt, Ilyas, Kellaway, Lenton, Lion, Luxton, McWilliams, Mills, Quick, Richards, Sharma, Sharpe, Shelim, Smith, Story, Werner, D. Wilson, E. Wilson. 5 Councillors voted against the motion: Councillor Beer, Da Costa, Jones, C. Rayner and S. Rayner. Six Councillors abstained: Alexander, Bowden, Grey, Muir, Rankin and Yong)

215. BERKSHIRE BUSINESS RATES PILOT APPLICATION

Members considered a proposal in response to the invitation to all local authorities in England to apply to be a 100% business rates pilot in 2018-19. Councillor Rankin explained that the proposal would unlock £25m of funding to the LEP for transport infrastructure. During 2017 Surrey County Council agreed a pilot with the government. The Leader wrote to the Secretary of State to ask for other local authorities to be offered the opportunity to be a pilot. As a result, a process was started to allow local authorities to retain income growth and explore other options for the design of local government financing reforms. Internal modelling was initially undertaken, led by Slough Borough Council. Berkshire Treasurers enlisted the help of the LEP and LG futures to further develop a brief.

As was well known, 50% of business rates collected went directly to national government; 1 % went to the Fire Authority; 49% went to the local authority. At the end of that process was a year-end levy calculation allowing the council to retain some of the growth. All Berkshire authorities actually collected more than their baseline amount of business rates. In the new pilot the council would maintain the 50% share of the baseline but the year-end revenue calculation process would not be required therefore the council would retain more locally. For 2018/19 it was estimated to be £35m for the six Berkshire authorities. It was proposed that 70% of the gain be put into a strategic fund to be run by the LEP. Every council would then get the same return as if there were no pilot. This meant for the year of the pilot, the council could not be financially worse off. The remaining 30% would be shared equally between the six authorities until the £1m mark was reached. Then the share of growth would be given on a pro rata basis.

It had been suggested that the borough should submit a sole bid to retain more of the funding. However although there was no published criteria, it was believed that the government would be interested in investing in strategic infrastructure.

Councillor Dudley explained that successful bidders would be notified before Christmas. The council was very hopeful for success and was pitching hard for local communities.

Councillor Da Costa asked whether the application had already been submitted. He requested that the details come back to an Overview and Scrutiny Panel if the bid was successful. Councillor Rankin confirmed that the bid had already been submitted, the report requested support for the application. Councillor Dudley suggested that the appropriate forum would be the Audit and Performance Review Panel.

It was proposed by Councillor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Dudley and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council notes the report and:

i) Support the application set out in appendix A.

216. WINDSOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Members considered 17 capital schemes within the proposed 2018-19 budget that the council was seeking to bring forward into 2017-18 in order to start carrying out the improvement works in 2017-18.

Councillor Bicknell stated that this was probably the most important paper to bring to Full Council for approval because it was driven by the announcement on 27 November 2017 by Prince Harry that he intended to get married in Windsor in May 2018. He acknowledged the small amount of notice for the report but it was important that Windsor town looked at its very best. The town was used to state visits and Royal Horse Shows but the wedding was happening in St Georges chapel within the castle. Windsor received over 7 million visitors a year who spent nearly half a billion pounds, which in turn resulted in about 10,000 jobs. This was impressively 13% of all jobs in the borough. Prince Harry would marry Meghan Markle, an American citizen born and raised in Los Angeles, California. Americans loved a big occasion and he was sure many thousands would travel to be part of the history being made.

The report was asking for 17 capital scheme bids to be brought forward, which covered three lead member portfolios. They had been scrutinised and all scrutiny comments had been incorporated. If the recommendations were approved the much needed improvements could start in January 2018, not only for the main TV shots up and down Thames Street and Castle Hill, but the surrounding parks and adjacent street scenes. The total spend was £2.6 million of which just over £1 million was funded from external sources. The cost of borrowing for bringing the schemes forward was about £70,000. He believed this was a price worth paying to help make the world class town continue being a must-visit destination for many more years to come.

Councillor Dudley stated that the council wanted to ensure Windsor was a town fit for a prince and a princess. When the council had heard that the wedding would be in Windsor, it was suggested works should be accelerated to ensure the town looked as good as possible. It would also be important to ensure that works were not being undertaken at the time of the wedding. Councillor Dudley requested the wrap around York House be improved to be more attractive and include the borough logo.

Councillor Beer referred to the proposal for safety checks on play equipment and questioned why this was not already done on a yearly basis. Councillor S Rayner stated that she fully supported the proposals; the wedding gave the opportunity to show Windsor to the world. She confirmed safety checks were performed each year, it was just that the checks were being brought forward.

Councillor Dudley confirmed that the council was working with Thames Valley Police on the hostile vehicle mitigation measures, it was hoped that the replacements could be accelerated before the wedding to be more aesthetically pleasing.

Councillor E. Wilson commented that the £2.6m was not just for the wedding, but would also provide improvements that would last for years and would benefit residents and business as well. He referred to the need for improved litter facilities in the town centre, particularly for the day of the wedding. He would speak to the new Lead Member about this issue.

It was proposed by Councillor Bicknell and seconded by Councillor Dudley, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council notes the report and:

- i) Approves the bringing forward and approval of £2,600,000 of capital expenditure from the proposed 2018-19 budget to 2017-18;**
- ii) Delegates authority to the Executive Director in conjunction with the Lead Member for Highways, Transport and Windsor to carry out the improvement works.**

217. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

a) Question submitted by Councillor E Wilson to Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Planning and Health:

Will the Royal Borough add the location of defibrillators to its website?

Councillor Coppinger responded that this was a simple task to complete, and the locations of the Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) can be added to the RBWM website as a list, or as pin points on the existing RBWM community map. In addition, HeartSafe had the AED Locator and Arrhythmia Alliance website, on which RBWM's AEDs would be added. www.heartsafe.org.uk

South Central Ambulance Service had an App available for iPhone and iPad which had an AED Locator to which RBWM's AEDs could be added. He was aware that many Councillors had put some or all of their personal grant money towards defibrillators. In Bray he and Councillor Walters had supported one at Braywood Cricket Club and one in Holyport. On 15 December 2017 on Holyport Green a carol concert would take place to raise money for charity, including a further AED for Holyport.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor E. Wilson asked if the Lead Member would work with the Windsor and Maidenhead Lions who had a fantastic scheme to support AEDs.

Councillor Coppinger agreed to follow this up.

b) Question submitted by Councillor Jones to Councillor N. Airey, Lead Member for Children's Services:

Many schools are struggling financially. The funding doesn't allow for rises in costs such as pensions & NI (that have cut teaching budgets by 5.5%) and inflation. The IFS estimates that schools will lose nearly £2 billion by 2020.

What steps can this council take to raise awareness of this funding deficit and how are we supporting our schools?

Councillor Coppinger, on behalf of the absent Councillor N. Airey, responded that schools in the Royal Borough were making great strides in providing excellent education for borough children and young people. 86% of schools in the Royal Borough were rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted; indeed one third of them had reached the Outstanding judgement despite an increasingly difficult test by Ofsted. The scale of improvement in education across the country since 2012 was illustrated by the recent announcement in respect of reading: In 2012, 58% of 6 year olds passed reading checks. This year, that figure rose to 81%.

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

The borough worked well with schools in the Royal Borough and the Schools Forum was an effective representative body which made decisions about school funding and advised the Local Authority on its decisions. The Forum explored the proposed National Funding Formula which was to come into operation in April 2020 and considered ways to best transition from the current local formula to the National Funding Formula. Based on that work, schools had been consulted on a local funding formula for financial year 2018/19 which would mean 57 schools in the Borough would receive more money in 2018/19 than they did in 2017/18.

The overall increase in budget for education in the Royal Borough in financial year 2018/19 did not offset the costs which affected all schools as Councillor Jones had indicated. The Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Children's Services were campaigning for a review of funding levels in education and social care, as part of a public sector budget which balanced the wide range of pressures the country was now facing.

In the Royal Borough increasing financial pressure for many schools would come from the rising volume of those young people with additional needs. The council, along with its partners in Health had committed £450,000 to raise the skill levels in this area over the next three years, while schools themselves had committed £416,000 in 2018/19 to pilot new ways to support mainstream schools.

Schools, particularly small schools, may find the current financial climate challenging and the council was already seeing innovative collaboration which was saving money, such as sharing specialist expertise or resources. Also school Governors were leading the way by asking how each pound spent was driving progress for pupils and the council had asked its officers to work with small schools to develop a financial sustainability strategy to tie in with the development of options to meet the future demand for school places.

Councillor Jones confirmed she did not have a supplementary question.

c) Question submitted by Councillor Jones to Councillor Dudley, Leader of the Council:

Can the Leader update us on the steps taken to address the recommendations highlighted within the LGA Peer challenge?

Councillor Dudley responded that Following the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report, a comprehensive action plan had been drawn up focusing on eight areas:

- Structural and constitutional governance.
- Accountability.
- Scrutiny.
- Understanding of local place and priority setting.
- Leadership of place.
- Financial planning viability.
- Organisational leadership and governance.
- Capacity to deliver.

He was able to report good progress against all the recommendations and highlighted in particular:

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

- Members of the executive and wider executive, i.e. Deputy Lead and Principal Members, had now been replaced on Overview and Scrutiny panels.
- A review of the constitution would start in January 2018 through a working party involving the Principal Member for HR, Legal and IT.
- For the first time the Royal Borough had published its budget plans three months early to enable discussion and robust scrutiny before the budget was set in February 2018.
- A comprehensive resident survey by an external professional agency was being planned and the outcome will be reported in June 2018.
- The scope of the existing vacant Economic Development Officer post had been reviewed to now include a greater business partnership focus.
- The council continued to move forward with the Borough Local Plan process.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Jones suggested that new Members receiving SRAs should be given a role description and training, possibly mandatory.

Councillor Dudley responded that some of these issues could be dealt with via the constitution review.

d) Question submitted by Councillor Da Costa to Councillor S Rayner, Lead Member for Culture and Communities:

Universal Credit has already caused great suffering to citizens young and old in the UK and will affect our residents from May 2018.

What preparations are being made by RBWM to offer financial help, coaching, education and outreach and can you assure residents that none of our residents will fall into the poverty trap because of Universal Credit's roll out?

Councillor S. Rayner responded that the council had worked closely with the DWP to ensure the most vulnerable residents were protected. The DWP had advised that there would be 665 new Universal Credit claimants in 2018/19 of which 40 would require assisted digital support and personal budget support. Officers had started to map out the additional provision that would be needed by the council and partner agencies. WAM Get involved were undertaking training on Universal credit for various local organisations. Information would be available 24.7 via the council website and in libraries. A Member briefing would be held in the new year.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Da Costa asked when details of the programme would be published for scrutiny, and if sufficient funds would be made available to allow immediate payments for Universal credit and Council Tax support?

Councillor S. Rayner responded that information would be available in community libraries and the hubs. Members would be invited to a training session.

e) Question submitted by Councillor Da Costa to Councillor Bicknell, Lead Member for Highways, Transport and Windsor:

There are reports on social media and from Slough Council, that First Buses are discontinuing the routes 702, 2, 5, 10/11, 15 and reducing availability on routes 1,

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

7 & 4. Can the Lead Member shed any light on this and whether the no. 2 will be continuing?

Councillor Bicknell responded that First Group' had deregistered a number of existing services which affected residents within the Royal Borough.

Details were not shared by 'First' in advance and officers had subsequently met with the Managing Director (FirstBus in Hampshire, Dorset & Berkshire) to express disappointment about the manner in which this was handled and communicated and to understand the rationale for the decision which was entirely commercially driven.

The routes impacted by the decision were:

- Service 2 (Dedworth – Windsor – Slough)
- Service 10/11 (Slough – Datchet – Sunnymeads – Wraysbury – Heathrow)
- Service 15 (Slough – Eton Wick)

In addition, route 702 (Greenline service from Bracknell to London Victoria via Ascot and Windsor) was deregistered by 'First Group' but had been taken on by 'Reading Buses' which would ensure similar levels of services were maintained without a break in service.

The council's objective was very clearly to ensure that all the communities that were currently served by these routes continue to be served from 21 January 2018, when the 'First Group' services would cease. However, there may be alterations to routes and timetables.

The council had engaged with different operators and secured proposals to continue operating services in these areas and was working very closely with Slough Borough Council, Heathrow Airports Ltd. and Surrey County Council to agree a new network. It was also important to note that this piece of work would be data led and services would reflect levels of need and demand.

In parallel the council was exploring demand responsive services which may better meet needs and had engaged with Arriva with respect to their uber-style bus service (Arriva Click) which had been launched in Kent and may offer real benefits for residents and business.

Work on the new proposals was well advanced but not concluded. However, it was his intention to ensure continuity of services in the affected areas when the existing services ceased.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Da Costa commented mobility was key to economic prosperity and success. He hoped that proposals would include a transport solution including buses that helped to reduce pollution and supported the mobility of the vulnerable, enliven the town centres and support more high density development. He asked when the results of the review would be available.

Councillor Bicknell responded that the results would be available shortly, before Christmas.

218. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Councillor Kellaway introduced his motion. He explained that the GWR franchise would soon be up for renewal. The improved links for Maidenhead into London with the Elizabeth line and electrification of the mainline were excellent but did not include the Marlow line. Some direct services would be lost from Cookham and Furze Platt. There would be reasonably good links during the morning and evening, but not during the daytime. He was aware that there were engineering complications but he urged GWR to take account of this in the new franchise. The line to Marlow was one of the last to use steam and was called the Marlow donkey. It would be a shame if Cookham and Furze Platt were stuck in the 17th Century when Maidenhead was moving forward. He requested a direct approach to GWR.

Councillor Dudley stated that he would be delighted to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, copying in Sajid Javid MP, the Prime Minister and the Chief Executive of GWR. Councillor Kellaway should be involved in the drafting.

Councillor Werner commented that there was work going on at Bourne End to make this possible.

It was proposed by Councillor Kellaway, seconded by Councillor Werner, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council calls on Great Western Railways to include and commit to a regular half hourly service through the day on the Marlow line. This line links Marlow, Bourne End, Cookham and Furze Platt to Maidenhead station and the Elizabeth Line which opens in 2019. We applaud this new connection and the electrification of the mainline but for maximum benefit to our residents a half hourly service is vital.

The meeting, which began at 7.30pm, finished at 9.56pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....

Addendum to minutes relating to Council Tax support rates as requested during the meeting:

Council	Political make-up	% contribution
Amber Valley	Conservative	8.5
Babergh	Conservative	8.5
Bolsover	Labour	8.5
Breckland	Conservative	8.5
Canterbury	Conservative	10
Chesterfield	Labour	8.5

COUNCIL - 12.12.17

Chorley	Labour	7.5
Corby	Labour	8.5
Costwold	Conservative	8.5
Craven	Conservative	10
Derbyshire Dales	Conservative	8.5
East Cambs	Conservative	8.5
East Dorset	Conservative	8.5
East Herts	Conservative	8.5
Erewash	Conservative	8.5
Forest Heath	Conservative	8.5
Gateshead	Labour	8.5
Great Yarmouth	NOC run by Conservtaive/UKIP	8.5
Ipswich	Labour	8.5
LB Hounslow	Labour	8.5
LB Islington	Labour	8.5
Liverpool	Labour	8.5
Mid Suffolk	Conservative	5
North Dorset	Conservative	8.5
North East Derbyshire	Labour	8.5
North Kesteven	Conservative	10
North Norfolk	Conservative	8.5
Purbeck	Conservative	8
Rotherham	Labour	8.5
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	Conservative	10
Rushcliffe	Conservative	8.5
Ryedale	NOC run by Conservative	8.5
South Cambs	Conservative	8.5
South Northants	Conservative	8.5
Staffordshire Moorlands	Conservative	8.5
Suffolk Coastl	Conservative	8.5
Sunderland	Labour	8.5
Vale of White horse	Conservative	8.5
Warrington	Labour	8.5
Waveney	Conservative	8.5
West Dorset	Conservative	8.5
West Lindsey	Conservative	10
West Oxfordhsire	Conservative	8.5
Weymouth and Portland	NOC run by Conservative/Labour/Lib Dem/Green/Independent	8.5
Wyre	Conservative	8.5