

**AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Desborough Suite -
Town Hall on Tuesday, 23rd February, 2016**

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Eileen Quick), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Sayonara Luxton)

Councillors Michael Airey, Natasha Airey, David Hilton, Edward Wilson, Lynda Yong, Maureen Hunt, Malcolm Beer, Hashim Bhatti, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, Gerry Clark, David Coppinger, Carwyn Cox, David Evans, Geoff Hill, Mohammed Ilyas, Richard Kellaway, John Lenton, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Phillip Bicknell, Jack Rankin, Colin Rayner, Samantha Rayner, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Hari Sharma, Malcolm Alexander, Christine Bateson, David Burbage, John Collins, Simon Dudley, Dr Lilly Evans, Jesse Grey, Charles Hollingsworth, Lynne Jones, Ross McWilliams, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John Story, Claire Stretton, Lisa Targowska, Simon Werner and Derek Wilson

Officers: Russell O'Keefe, Jessica Hosmer-Wright, Andrew Brooker, Chris Hilton, Alison Alexander, Simon Fletcher, David Scott, Anna Trott, Richard Bunn, Andy Jeffs and Simon Rowberry

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors George Bathurst, Stuart Carroll, Marius Gilmore, Paul Lion, Philip Love, Asghar Majeed, Nicola Pryer, Derek Sharp and Leo Walters.

24. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2015 be approved, subject to the following amendments:

- p.20 to read: 'Councillor Werner stated that he was disappointed with the motion and would not be able to support it. There was a need for *housing* to give people the opportunity to get on the housing ladder....'
- p.22 to read: 'Mr Hill, by way of a supplementary question, referred to the Peter Clarke report (*'Report into allegations concerning Birmingham schools arising from the 'Trojan Horse' letter, July 2014*), in particular *Recommendation 12:*

"Recommendation 12: Unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances, there should be a presumption that an individual will only be a governor at a maximum of two schools at any one time. All local authorities and multi-academy trusts should review their current governor arrangements, and where they identify an individual holding multiple positions they should consider the appropriate steps to ensure that a wider range of people are able to hold governor positions and that no single individual has undue influence over a number of schools."

Mr Hill stated that the report had been accepted in Parliament by the Secretary of State for Education. He also highlighted that the duty imposed was placed upon councils themselves and not merely Academies.

- **p.22 to read:** ‘Mr Hill, by way of a supplementary question, commented that looking at the *company’s* website he would not know that was what the company did; *the site represented Two5Nine as a sort of ‘management consultancy’ company.* He commented that Councillor Burbage’s declaration *as to whether or not the activities of Two5Nine were conducted for profit* differed from that by Councillors Dudley and Bicknell.

Councillor Burbage responded that he *was unsure which declaration was the most accurate and he would ensure that the correct declarations were added to the website. If the website was not clear in explaining the role of Two5Nine he would ask officers to add more detail.*

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Colin and Samantha Rayner declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in the item ‘Petition for Debate – Poundfield’ as they knew the owners of the site. They left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

Councillors Colin and Samantha Rayner declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in the Member Question A as they were both trustees of a trust that owned land that could be compulsory purchased by Heathrow. They left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Alexander declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the item ‘Maidenhead Golf Cub’ as a member of his family was a member of the golf club. He left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor Kellaway declared an interest in the item ‘Maidenhead Golf Cub’ as he had been a member in his year as Mayor and he was also a member of the temple Golf club.

Councillor Rayner declared an interest in the item ‘Maidenhead Golf Cub’ as he had been a member in his year as Mayor.

Councillor Sharma declared an interest in the item ‘Budget 2016/17’ as he worked for a bus company.

Councillor Dudley declared an interest in the item ‘Public Questions’ as he was a founder and chair of Governors of Holport College. His wife was a founder and governor. His youngest child would also likely to attend the school from September 2016.

Councillor Bicknell declared an interest in the item ‘Public Questions’ as his son was Director of Sport at Holyport College.

Councillor Smith declared an interest in the item ‘Public Questions’ as his wife worked in administration at Holyport College.

Councillor Brimacombe declared Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the item ‘Maidenhead Golf Club’ as he owned two properties with 300m of the golf club and one adjacent to the site. He left the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

26. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor submitted in writing details of engagements that she and the Deputy Mayor had undertaken since the last meeting, which were noted by the Council. She commented that there were lots of wonderful people in the borough doing great work and she thanked them all.

27. PETITION FOR DEBATE

A petition containing over 1000 signatories was submitted to the Council on 17 January 2016. In accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution, it was requested by the lead petitioner that the petition be debated at a full Council meeting.

The petition read as follows:

'We the undersigned petition The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to designate the Poundfield area in Cookham, including land adjacent to the Nursery School, as a Local Green Space in the new Local Plan'

The Interim Planning Policy Manager introduced the petition. He highlighted that the petition creator had stated that Poundfield was a crucial green space which was part of the fundamental character of Cookham and the request was directed to safeguarding Cookham's essential character. The Borough Local Plan was the only avenue for designation as there was no Neighbourhood Plan in Cookham.

Mr David Ashwanden, Lead Petitioner, thanked the borough on behalf of the Cookham Society. The petition and report recommendation were both about preserving Poundfield, a 15 acre site in the Cookham Conservation area. Poundfield was 'quintessential Cookham' and was cherished by both residents and visitors. A key section in the Cookham Village Design statement was that Cookham was defined by its green spaces; Poundfield was a central green space. The online petition had been supplemented by a hard copy petition; at times people were queuing to sign. Poundfield ticked all the boxes: it was the right size and in the right place. Visitors to the Stanley Spencer gallery would often then go to Poundfield to look at the views the painter had created. There had been multiple attempts to develop the site; resistance by the village was clear.

Mr Dick Scarfe referred Members to the March 1995 edition of the Cookham Society newsletter which had stated 'the Local Plan is vitally important for Poundfield. Five attempts over the years had failed. The developer survives to fight another day, the village can only lose once'. The edition also referred to church bells ringing in celebration when local people had won the day against the developer. Mr Scarfe then referred to photographs from the Maidenhead Advertiser in 1989 that showed 600 protestors had marched around the perimeter of the site, united in opposition to the controversial plan for development. He hoped councillors would unanimously support the recommendation in the report.

Councillor Saunders referred to email correspondence earlier that day where he had suggested that:

- an endorsement of the proposed designation of Poundfield as Local Green Space in the emerging Borough Local Plan does not prejudice or predetermine the undertaking, outcome or interpretation of future

consultations or the subsequent examination or adoption of that emerging Plan;

- the determination of future planning applications relating to Poundfield may reference and give weight to such an endorsement to the extent supported by the contents and stage reached of that emerging Plan.

Councillor Saunders commented that he believed the Council had heard a clear and compelling argument for why the area should be so designated. It was important to follow the sound management principle for either urban or rural land that people have to live there and be able to enjoy a sense of space, comfortable in their own environment not just behind their own front door. To do this there must be local green spaces. Poundfield had a chequered history with decades of various groups seeking to protect it from development. The Secretary of State in 1991 rejected development on the site and the borough later sought to confirm this by adding the site to the green belt. This technical decision was stopped on appeal by the principle landowner. However the Lord Justice stated that: 'The appellants can have small cause only to rejoice. Other rigorous planning controls would still apply to the land and there would be little expectation of any planning permissions. The Cookham Society and others interested need not be too concerned, it will I suspect be many more years before Stanley Spencer's view becomes available only in the art gallery.'

Councillor Kellaway welcomed the initiative to put the site into the Local Plan however he took a less romantic view. The site was unfortunately not an open space therefore residents could not get the full benefit. Sadly Stanley Spencer's view was no longer there as the trees had grown up. The pony field next to the site was in a state of disrepair. The fence was currently decorated with protest posters, many in relation to the chicken farm. It would be wonderful if the site could be opened up. He supported the recommendation.

Councillor Clark commented that the inclusion of open space was deemed as important in the Village Design Statement. The strength of feeling was clear from the number of signatories. This would be given great weight but due process would have to be followed and further consultation would be necessary.

The Lead Member for Planning explained that the council was currently in the process of producing a Borough Local Plan, although there were several hurdles still to go including further consultation. Poundfield could be included as an open space but further consultation would be required. He requested all residents that had supported the petition to write in during consultation so their feedback could be recorded and used as evidence in the examination.

Councillor Werner commented that the proposal had cross-party support. Cookham residents had been fighting to protect Poundfield as long as he could remember. He had little doubt they would be fully engaged with the consultation.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council endorses the proposed designation of Poundfield as Local Green Space in the emerging Borough Local Plan.

Councillor Mrs Yong arrived at 7.30pm.

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A petition containing over 1000 signatories was submitted to the Council on 24 January 2016. In accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution, it was requested by the lead petitioner that the petition be debated at a full Council meeting.

The petition read as follows:

'We the undersigned petition The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to provide immediate funding to enable work to commence at the earliest opportunity, within this financial year, on the agreed road safety proposal for Wraysbury Railway Station Bridge, Station Road'

The Strategic Director of Operations and Customer Services thanked the petitioners for their hard work and efforts in securing more than 1000 signatures. Additionally, support had been secured from both Wraysbury Parish Council and Horton Parish Council.

He explained that Wraysbury Station railway bridge was controlled by traffic signals but did not benefit from an accessible footpath which potentially created road safety risks, particularly for pedestrians. Royal Borough officers had undertaken a feasibility study and created an outline design solution which repositioned the traffic signals on both sides of the bridge and incorporated a new footway. This outline scheme would support the general principles of improving road safety and encouraging walking.

In summary, he welcomed the petition to improve pedestrian facilities from residents in Wraysbury and, subject to support from Council, would be very happy for officers to further develop the outline scheme, review costs and prepare a timetable for delivery which would be presented to Cabinet and shared with residents, Members, Horton Parish Council and Wraysbury Parish Council.

Council was addressed by Graham Cribbin and Henry Perez, Lead Petitioners. Mr Cribbin explained that he and Mr Perez had started the Wraysbury Speed Watch group to enable residents to inform and converse on any speeding issues they or their families had experienced. Over the past year the group had grown to 250 members, with many mentioning Wraysbury Station bridge as one of the key concerns. The group was aware of one fatality on the bridge and also one life-changing injury.

A site visit had been held in January 2016 with South West Trains, National Rail, the borough, Ward Councillor John Lenton and Parish Council Chairman Margaret Lenton. The group had walked across the bridge and reached the top when two buses had met; all had had to lean back onto the collapsed fence to avoid being hit. The lack of pathway meant those using wheelchairs or pushchairs had no access to the station or village shops. Everything that the group had spoken to the railway about had been undertaken. Further site meetings had taken place and a feasibility study and safety plan had been developed that would cost £85,000. The online and hard copy petition had attracted 2250 signatures, 70-80% of which were local residents.

Mr Perez explained that safety concerns relating to bridge access had been experienced by residents for over 20 years. In its current state the bridge was unsafe and not fit for purpose for pedestrian traffic. The population of Wraysbury and the number of station users had increased in recent years to an estimated 112,000 in 2014. Large numbers of residents worked from home and were visited by clients using the station. Two large leisure facilities in the area had increased both visitors and passengers. Safety issues arose for both pedestrians and drivers. At present there was a footpath either side but it stopped at the foot of the bridge. The bridge

contravened the Highway Code for pedestrians and fell short of good practice guidelines for those with disabilities. Mr Perez had addressed the recent Highways, Transport and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel, which had recommended to Council that funding be found for the works. The Cabinet had provided warm words of support if the quoted figures were correct.

Councillor Rayner first spoke as a Ward Councillor. He had grown up in the area and the bridge had always been known as dangerous. The number of passengers using the station in 2004 was 36,000. This had increased to 112,000 in 2015. He thoroughly recommended the report. Wraysbury residents had made their feelings loud and clear. Councillor Lenton made a minor correction to page 12 of the report as the Council had yet to accept the proposal. A solution had been put forward. The plan had been presented to and accepted by the two parish councils. The bridge was on the boundary between the two parishes. The report recommended approval but with a 20% contribution by the parish. The parish councils had not had any opportunity to discuss this but it was likely to be beyond their means.

Councillor Bhatti arrived at 7.45pm.

Councillor Dudley suggested removing the reference to the parish councils funding 20% of the scheme; instead the focus should be on developer contributions. The cost of bespoke schemes could escalate therefore a proper costing for the work was needed but if the final cost was anywhere near that quoted the scheme would proceed when it was brought to Cabinet for consideration. Councillor Dudley referred to further funding for Wraysbury in relation to the primary school.

Councillor Beer supported the recommendation; he had lived in Wraysbury earlier in his life. The bridge was known as dangerous because the road approached at an angle. Ground works may be necessary to increase the width of the road. He was pleased to hear that the parishes would not be expected to contribute to the cost of the scheme.

The Lead Member for Highways and Transport responded that no groundworks would be needed; if they were the cost would exceed £85,000.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That

- i) The council welcomes the petition from Wraysbury and Horton residents, and recognises the need for safe pedestrian access to Wraysbury Station.**
- ii) This council requests the Lead Member for Highways and Transport to report back to Cabinet with a fully costed proposal for the implementation of a footpath at Wraysbury Station.**

29. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Kate Sheehan of Cox Green asked the following question of Councillor D. Wilson:

I applaud Councillors Bicknell's comments at the last full Council meeting held in December 2015, stating 'every child should be able to walk to school safely'. As this is RBWM's policy, why was planning consent given to Holyport College without a safe pedestrian and cycle route being part of the planning approval conditions'

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Councillor D. Wilson responded that he had checked the record of the meeting on 15 December 2015 and Cllr Bicknell had stated that 'every child should be able to get to school safely'. He continued to explain that the site now used by Holyport College was previously occupied by Holyport Manor school, an education establishment; permission was granted under application 13/00287 for the redevelopment of the site to provide a new secondary school. The planning officer's report to Panel on 28 May 2013, which he had chaired, clearly set out the highway considerations on which the application was assessed but also that the application was made on the basis of no pupil or staff member walking or cycling to school. A draft travel plan was submitted with a transport assessment supporting the application and a condition of the permission was a requirement to have a full Travel Plan for the future. This condition was discharged in consultation with highway colleagues.

Ms Sheehan, by way of a supplementary question, asked for confirmation that Holyport College be put on a list of all schools requiring safe routes and not prioritised?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that the council would consider safe routes for all schools; all would be looked at during the process. It was an evolving process.

Kate Sheehan of Cox Green asked the following question of Councillor D. Wilson:

The original Holyport College travel plan stated that you would offer FREE transport to all pupils attending the school and at your consultation meeting in Holyport prior to build you stated to me that no pavement was needed because free transport would be available. Why are you now supporting a walking/cycling route rather than Holyport College providing free transport as promised?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that he was perplexed as he had not offered free transport and he had not attended a consultation meeting. As per the previous answer all schools in the borough would be provided with safe routes.

Ms Sheehan stated that she had submitted the question to Cllr Dudley rather than Councillor D. Wilson.

Councillor Dudley explained that originally there was free transport for pupils as part of the Travel Plan; those rights had been grandfathered for pupils still at that school who joined in 2014/15. Those attending from 15/16 onwards would have to pay for transport. Parents and friends of pupils were keen that pupils could walk or cycle to school and had resented a petition to tis effect. The school has set aside over £80,000 in s106 funding and the council had agreed to look into such a scheme.

Ms Sheehan, by way of a supplementary question, commented that Councillor Dudley had stated that funding of £83,000 for the scheme would be paid by Holyport College as part of a legacy agreement. However, the agreement said the funding was for the Ascot Road and Forest Green Road junction rather than general improvements. She asked him to explain the discrepancy and who confirm would pay for the junction improvements if needed at a later date?

Councillor Dudley responded that the legal agreement between the borough and the school referred to funds to be used on schemes agreed by both parties. The scheme would be considered by Cabinet when a proposal was brought forward.

Councillor Werner suggested that Ms Sheehan should receive an apology for the tone of voice used by Councillor Dudley. The Mayor commented that it was not always easy to answer a question that a councillor was not prepared for and Councillor Dudley had done very well to respond; therefore an apology was not necessary.

30. PETITIONS

The following petition was presented by Councillor Rankin:

'We the undersigned ask the council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead to urgently review the traffic calming measures on Frances Road in consultation with the residents to ensure that effective controls are in place to reduce traffic speeds and the potentially damaging impact of heavy vehicles on house, caused by vibrations as they pass over the existing arrangements.'

Councillor Rankin addressed the meeting to summarise the content of the petition. He explained that he and his fellow ward councillors had been presented a petition by the residents of Frances Road. The petition requested a review of traffic calming measures and consultation with residents and ward councillors. On the road traffic travelled too fast for an urban area and traffic calming measures had been put in place. Due to poor positioning of speed bumps this was causing vibrations within homes on the road.

The Mayor ruled that the petition should be referred to Cabinet for consideration

31. 2016/17 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

Members considered approval of the programme of meetings for the Council, Cabinet and the various Panels, Forums etc for the 2016/17 Municipal Year. Councillor Burbage explained that a revised version was before Members following necessary changes as a result of the EU referendum on 23 June 2016.

Councillor Dudley proposed that an extraordinary meeting of the Council be arranged to enable Members to debate the EU referendum. This would not be a whipped vote.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That:

- i) The Programme of Meetings for the 2016/17 Municipal Year, (revised version circulated to Members at the meeting) be approved.**
- ii) An extraordinary meeting of the Full Council be held to debate the EU Referendum; date to be confirmed.**

32. APPROVAL OF THE UPDATED PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2016/17

Members considered approval of an updated Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17 as required by the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Beer commented that the document referred to the lowest paid and highest paid employees, but there was no information on intermediate grades. He also suggested that as quite a lot of staff worked in Windsor, a deal for discounted rail

travel be negotiated similar to that already in place with Great Western for Maidenhead employees.

Councillor Burbage commented that the Pay Policy statement was only required to detail the highest and lowest paid employees, it was not intended to describe the entire pay structure. The information would be made available to Councillor Beer if he wished. He would look into the issue of discounted rail travel. Councillor Rayner commented that an approach had already been made and, unfortunately, rejected.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Full Council approve the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 and publishes it on its website by 31 March 2016.

33. BUDGET 2016/17

Members considered the Council budget for 2016/17.

The Lead Member for Finance thanked all officers for their hard work and diligence that made the budget possible. He thanked all Members, in particular those newly elected in May 2015, as the budget was a joint effort. He highlighted that Andrew Brooker, the Head of Finance, was leaving at the end of March 2016. Mr Brooker had been with the borough for almost 20 years and was a fantastic officer.

The Lead Member explained that the budget was based on three pillars:

- Low taxation. The borough had the lowest council tax outside of London and believed deeply that residents were taxed on the money they earned and should not be taxed again.
- Protection of the most vulnerable. Investments were being made in adult social care and children's services.
- Investing for the future. The council was investing to make the borough a better place to live. The council was working to build the tax base to enable this to happen.

The budget was set against a challenging settlement from central government. In 2015/16 the grant was £28.7m; this would reduce by 45% to £15.1m by 2019/20. Yet again council tax was being frozen at a Band D level of £906.95. In real terms this was a reduction of 0.8% as RPI was 0.8% in September 2015. In nominal terms this represented a reduction of 12.6% over seven years or 31.4% in real terms. The council was taking the opportunity to introduce the 2% Adult Social Care precept. To achieve the freeze, savings of £5.7m had been identified with a further £14.6m in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2019/20. This has been achieved through efficiencies rather than cuts to frontline services.

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The capital programme totalled £25m, of which £15m was corporately funded. Expansion of secondary schools would use £2.5m, which formed part of an overall programme for school expansion totalling £20m.

To achieve its objectives the council had to build its tax base. The assumption was for the equivalent of 1000 band D properties to be built every year in the borough. The council had invested £680,000 from the development fund in the Borough Local Plan process.

The government settlement had been so severe that the treasury had reconsidered and had subsequently provided £500m of transition grant funding. The borough would receive £1.3m for each of 2016/17 and 2018/19. This funding would be passed to the development fund.

The Opposition Spokesperson, Councillor Mrs Jones offered her thanks to the officers for their hard work to produce budget and to Andrew Brooker, the finance team and the Directors for their time. She explained that, as in previous years the Opposition did not consider providing an alternative budget to be a proper use of the council's limited resources given the large majority the current administration held.

She had stood at the Council meeting in 2015 and asked for a freeze on council tax because of service pressures, but as always there were speeches full of self congratulation and the council tax reduction of 2.1% was voted through. This year the administration was proposing an increase, not a freeze, of 2% on the amount a resident paid to the council to provide services. If her recommendation had been accepted then the council would have been in the same place but it would not have had to renege on the manifesto promise to limit council tax rises at or below the rate of inflation.

Councillor Mrs Jones highlighted that last year (and in 2014) she had raised concerns that the budget was not viable in future years, that central funding would continue to reduce and that costs relating to adult social care, children's services and waste management would continue to rise. This was even detailed on page 218 of the 15/16 budget paper within a graph from The Independent Commission on Local Government Finance. Councillor Walters said he felt it was ludicrous that anyone should vote against the proposed budget or abstain. Councillor Bicknell said the problems she had highlighted were 'ill-conceived' and that 'a balanced budget had been produced this year and next year would be no different'. Councillor Evans said her speech was 'full of doom and gloom' and that every year the council had delivered.

This year it didn't; the only way the books were balanced was by raiding the council's reserves. Adult social care had overspent the original budget by £2.1m so far. Last year the administration had estimated that costs (service pressures) for 16/17 would rise by £1.4m; the figure in the paper had increased to £5.2m. The Medium Term Plan now also highlighted that to balance the budget, even with a 2% increase in council tax each year, the council would have to make additional savings of £57m over the next 4 years, a huge jump from last year's forecasted 18m.

There was a move towards outsourcing or services run by other councils/companies. The council must ensure that all elected members could still have the oversight and

influence on service that was expected by their residents and not relinquish this responsibility in the search for reducing cost.

Councillor Mrs Jones was of the view that administration was blinkered to the risks by the glory of being able to boast of a sixth year of reductions, and was now trying to gloss over the huge pressure put on officers to achieve unattainable savings targets. Anyone could stand up and give a list of achievements but unless it was also acknowledged where it had gone wrong then it could never be a transparent council.

Councillor Mrs Jones highlighted that there had been:

- A full year unbudgeted cost of £2.8m in adult social care
- £300,000 unbudgeted costs to cover the production of the Borough Local Plan (initially scheduled for April 2015 but still not completed, with huge financial implications regarding the inability to collect any Community Infrastructure Levy contributions at the present time)
- £1.5m of redundancy costs since 2012 that were not included in the budget but again came from reserves.
- Staff costs saved by delaying filling vacancies, adding to pressure on remaining officers and service levels.

The planning department has been under-resourced for several years. Last year Councillor Hilton applauded the fact that the number of planning applications had risen, saying it had shown confidence from developers. It was a shame that the department had not got the resources to cope with that demand and extra costs had been incurred by the need to outsource the registration of applications to address the backlog. Councillor Mrs Jones stated that last year she had highlighted that extra resources, such as consultants, would be needed to mitigate the risks of the Borough Local Plan not being in place. No extra funding was detailed and £300,000 was later funded from reserves.

The administration had a manifesto commitment to increase the number of community wardens from 18 to 36. Councillor Mrs Jones commented that there had not been an increase yet and again there was no funding detailed in the current budget year to move this forwards. She questioned where the funding would come from?

If Members supported the recommendations included in the budget then a resident that moved into the borough when the administration had taken control of the council would have seen a reduction in council tax for a Band D property of £68.89 per year or £1.32 per week. If that resident wished to renew their season parking pass for Home Park, Windsor in the next year it would cost them an extra £75 per year; Romney Lock would mean an extra £100 per year. This could be considered a stealth tax, and certainly not a fair tax as, according to officers, the residents' Advantage Card did not apply when purchasing season tickets. These residents would be between £6 and £30 worse off next year, but it would bring £300,000 into the council's coffers. At Cabinet she had been told that the season ticket rise was only £2 per week. In the words of Councillor Brimacombe at the budget meeting last year 'It is a dangerous and arrogant path that leads councils to assume that any increase is a good thing and any reduction is not'.

In her second year of responding to the budget Councillor Saunders commented that the reason the Conservatives increased council tax in their first two years was

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because they had to contend with 'a £1m black hole of fatuous savings and increases in parking charges on residents'. Councillor Mrs Jones commented that history was repeating itself. This budget had had to write back into accounts 'fatuous savings' that enabled council tax cuts in recent years, for instance a £300,000 black hole from the unrealised savings regarding combining roles into a generic Community Officer.

On a personal note, Councillor Mrs Jones commented that she had been highlighting the increased pressures on adult social care so of course she supported the increase in council tax to ensure that the council provided its statutory services. She noted that the Medium Term Plan included raising council tax by 2% for the next four years. She had concerns over the lack of detail as to how the council would fund resources going forward without depleting reserves. The Administration was looking to sell assets, but that could only be done once and any future council would not have the luxury to subsidise council tax .

Given that the council was now in receipt of an extra £1.2m from the transitional grant she requested a commitment to:

- reconsider the increase in parking charges
- put detail into the funding of community wardens
- ensure that funding was in place so that the planning department had adequate resources to deliver a prompt service to the residents and also to deliver the Borough Local Plan

This would justify her support for the recommendations in the paper; if that commitment could not be made then she would have no choice but to abstain.

Councillor Sharma explained the philosophy and vision of the council. He was a great believer in the economic theory of Adam Smith contained in 'An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations' (1776). When people were given the freedom to be the best they could be, the result was both poor and rich had a better economic situation. The poor won in a free trade economy; it was not the role of government to make all richer. The distribution of wealth could work effectively with the absence of government interference. It was a good thing that people were living longer but this placed additional demands on adult social care. To cover this the council had opted to introduce the 2% precept. Freezing of core council tax showed consistency in policy. The council was able to deliver innovative solutions to deal with the new financial realities of the world.

Councillor Coppinger explained that the council intended to raise £1.19m for adult social care by taking advantage of the 2% ring fenced precept. The council was also increasing the total amount spent by £4.3m. The borough population over age 65 had increased by 8% since 2011, the borough population over 85 years of age had increased by 17% over the same period. 30% of those age over 65 lived alone and therefore had to turn to a third party support. A Supreme Court ruling in 2015 had increased cost pressures by making councils responsible for the assessment of individuals in residential care homes. The council could have increased charges and fees and reduced services, but it had not. The homecare cost remained at £16 per hour. The council was actually investing in better services, for example outcome based commissioning.

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The council was working with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to provide better services for older residents through a combined budget of £2.5bn. The borough put residents first. He did not feel that £18 extra per year for a Band D property to fund services for vulnerable residents was too much to ask.

Councillor D. Wilson commented that councils across the country were having to cut services and raise council tax. This council was able to freeze council tax and still provide services to residents. He highlighted £3m funding for the Waterways project and additional funding for the Broadway Opportunity area. When companies were relocating to Maidenhead from the City of London, this was a huge plus for the town. Councillor D. Wilson explained that s106 was still being collected. The council's CIL proposals would be considered at examination on 3 March 2106. The Borough Local Plan was in progress for a submission by the end of September 2016. The council was using external consultants to deal with planning applications because of the increase in volume as more people wanted to live in the borough.

Councillor Bicknell highlighted the council's commitment to the education of young people, in particular:

- An additional £300,000 for home to school transport to deal with growth and those pupils needing to attend special schools outside the borough.
- £.5m to start the expansion programme for secondary schools.
- £300,000 for buildings at Wraysbury school including replacement of the heating system.
- £200,000 for a feasibility study for a satellite grammar school.
- £100,000 for a new Schools Participatory Budget programme.

The Department for Education had increased the Direct Schools Grant in line with the growth in the number of children in borough schools. A further £250,000 had been secured for pupils with special educational needs.

Councillor McWilliams highlighted the investment of £500,000 for Cox Green School. The national government position was the need to bring down the national debt. Local authorities needed to play their part; this council was by implementing savings. The grant had been cut by 45% but the reallocation of business rates was also being considered. By improving the local economy it was hoped the council would be able to keep more funding. The budget was a remarkable performance in light of the settlement, in particular the 31% reduction in real terms. This had put millions back into the local economy. The council had controlled finance by identifying savings such as the £475,000 in energy savings. Investments in the local economy included £3m for the Waterways project, £2.9m for the Broadway area, £2.5m for expansion of schools and £1.9m for adult social care.

Councillor Kellaway thanked Andrew Brooker for his support during the three years he had been Lead Member for Finance. Rigorous discipline had allowed six years of council tax reductions. Parking charges would be increased this year; he urged residents to use their Advantage Card wherever they could. In his capacity as a member of the Maidenhead Town Partnership Board he requested an eye be kept on charges in Maidenhead on a Sunday whilst the retail offer was still fragile.

Councillor Werner highlighted the self-congratulatory nature of budget meetings and commented he would join in this year. He highlighted that Councillor Mrs Jones had in

2015 predicted an adult social care overspend of £2m, which had come out at £2.1m. He hoped therefore that the Lead Member would involve Councillor Mrs Jones in budget discussions. He praised Councillor Coppinger for admitting the council had got it wrong in last year's budget and welcomed the realisation that adult social care needed to be financed. In overview, Councillor Werner commented that the council seemed to be running out of revenue funding and be moving to selling assets, for example the land at Deerswood. He had also heard at Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel that Maidenhead Golf club may be up for sale. The council owned land at Reform Road and he therefore presumed a plan would be developed for the site. Selling of assets was not by nature bad but could only be done once. S106 had previously been a source of funding. He had heard a rumour that a lot of development in Maidenhead town centre would not have CIL paid on it, which was a serious concern as the infrastructure was not in place to support new homes. Council tax was being increased by 2%. He often named budgets and suggested this one would be called the 'morning after' budget.

Councillor D. Evans highlighted that the burden of taxation was being moved from central government onto the local taxpayer. Virtually every council was collecting the 2% precept which would raise £370m nationally. He compared this to the £350m that the UK paid to the EU Commission each week, which was then spent with out any democratic accountability. The EU auditor had said that £15m of this was either misspent or fraudulently spent. The referendum was an opportunity to regain control of our money.

Councillor Burbage commented that this was a great budget by a great local authority. In many previous years claims had been made about the unsustainability of council tax and these had proved to be completely false. In relation to the sale of assets, if an asset was taken for a capital sum that was the end of the matter, however the council was using its assets to generate revenue and therefore support lowering the council tax burden for residents. Faced with the challenges of a lower grant, rising costs and rising demands for services the council was the only Berkshire authority and one of few in the country to be able to freeze core council tax at a level the lowest outside London. Councillor Burbage referred to statutory Instrument 118 of 2016 which detailed the precept. It was therefore not part of core council tax although he recognised it was a charge to the tax payer. He highlighted that in 2008/09 the borough council tax was £200 lower than that of Reading. Since then the borough had reduced its charge by £100 whereas Reading had increased its by £200. There was therefore now a difference of £500.

Councillor Burbage commented that it had been a pleasure to chair the Fire Authority working party last year. With the support of Councillors Bicknell, Lenton and Mrs Bateson, the precept for the authority was only to increase by 1%. This was likely to be the lowest increase across combined fire authorities in the country. He highlighted that under the previous Liberal Democrat administration council tax had risen by 24.3% whereas it had fallen by 31% in real terms under the Conservatives.

Councillor Mrs Airey stated that, on behalf of the children and young people of the Borough she was very pleased to support the Lead Member's budget this year. She specifically wanted to thank the Lead Member for always taking account of the needs of the less vocal residents, children and young people, who were not able to vote.

Over the last few years the administration had constantly reinforced its commitment to supporting children and young people and vulnerable families, for example:

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- In 2013/14 an additional £330,000 (Safeguarding placements £200,000; Troubled Families £130,000)
- In 2014/15 an additional £500,000 (Safeguarding placements £340,000; Social Workers £160,000)
- In 2015/16 an additional £384,000 to reduce social work caseloads
- In 2016/17 an additional £240,000 for safeguarding placements

Over the last four years, over £2m of additional resources had been diverted to working with children, young people, families and the most vulnerable. This additional resource had meant that the council could employ additional social workers, ensuring case loads were at an appropriate level so staff had the time to work intensively with families. The council had invested in its fostering system, ensuring foster parents were rewarded appropriately for the work they undertook on the council's collective behalf, and ensured that additional resources were available to fund high cost placements for very vulnerable young adolescents.

The increases were set against savings, which in the main had been delivered through efficiencies such as management realignment, contract renegotiation and joining together of service areas to deliver more holistic support services to families, such as children's centres and parenting workers. Alongside these changes Children's Services was continuing to improve operational practice, which would support further efficiencies in the future. For instance the change in practice through the establishment of the MASH. The MASH was now live with all parties co-located in the Town Hall. In other parts of the country where MASHs had been running for longer, they had proven to impact more quickly on lives. There was national evidence to confirm the earlier you impacted on lives, turning lives around, the less cost there was to the state. The support for the MASH would affect in the future the level of demand, hence reducing costs, but more importantly it would enable some of the most vulnerable residents to flourish.

Councillor Mrs Airey had recently attended the Youth Annual Achievement Awards evening run by youth services. Hundreds of young people and their families attended to collect their award to recognise their achievement. She had also been impressed with the level of volunteering that was taking place by adult residents in supporting young people. Investment in the youth service provided huge value for money as this secured the support of 59 volunteers, who supported a diverse range of young people. She confirmed that the resource being invested in Children's Service in 2016/17 would ensure the council continued to deliver to residents a range of services and also maintain its safeguarding services.

Councillor Rankin highlighted a number of important commitments to Windsor in the capital programme, in particular enhancements at Alexandra Gardens. These included a new bandstand and £100,000 to enhance the entrance to the park and the riverside area. High quality public realm projects in Charles Street, Peascod Place, Bachelors Acre and Chariots Place were also in place. The council had committed to support the

Theatre Royal. Funding was also in the budget to ensure frontline services at York House.

Councillor Rayner highlighted projects in his portfolio area:

- £150,000 for flood prevention
- £285,000 for the lower Thames Flood Relief Strategy
- £1.6m resurfacing programme
- £500,000 for Maidenhead Station Interchange
- £550,000 for Jesus Hospital Bridge
- £30,000 for the A4 cycle route
- £250,000 for Windsor Primary School.

He explained that 63 of 64 schemes in the council's road resurfacing scheme were complete. The budget was £1.6m and £1.5m had been spent. The balance of funding was to be spent on pre-patching works in advance of the 2016/17 programme. Approximately 130 resident parking schemes had been delivered within approved budget. A number of traffic management schemes had been delivered within budget. A new roundabout at Cookham Road / Ray Mill Road West had been delivered within budget, with a saving of £6,000. The overall Highways & Transport revenue budget was projected to deliver savings against a budget of £150,000 within 2015/16.

In relation to parking charges, he explained that they were reviewed every year but usually only increased every other year. There had been no increase in season ticket costs since 2010. Tickets could be bought on a quarterly or monthly basis so there was no need for all the money up front. The increase was equal to a cup of coffee a week in McDonalds. In comparison to other Berkshire authorities, the borough still had the lowest season ticket price. Residents could use Advantage Cards for a discount on the first three hours of parking in council car parks. If this were applied to season tickets which were valid all day, the discount would have to be excluded for all tariffs.

Councillor Cox highlighted the investment of £3.7m next year and the year after to replace street lights with LED lamps. The council had looked at re-procurement contracts including for waste disposal. Waste was being transferred to an energy for waste plant rather than costly landfill. This had resulted in a cost saving in conjunction with a maintained weekly bin collection and improved recycling rates. Cabinet on 25 February 2016 would consider continuing with the night-time economy pilot in Windsor, which had been a success. The manifesto commitment to increase the number of community wardens would then follow. It would be wrong to put a figure in

the budget at this stage when it had not yet been worked out how this could best be delivered.

Councillor Lenton thanked Andrew Brooker, Head of Finance, particularly in relation to the administration of the Berkshire Pension Fund. He thanked the Lead Member on behalf of the people of Wraysbury for the staff facilities at the primary school, proposals for Wraysbury Bridge and dredging of the vital flood relief channels. He also highlighted the council's commitment to the River Thames programme.

Councillor Grey thanked the Lead Member on behalf of Datchet. He commented on the improved cycle route, a bus service to Windsor, rehousing of a number of residents who had fallen on hard times, with excellent back up from adult social care. All major roads had been resurfaced or improved. Riverside investment included benches, lighting, a restored fountain, fencing and planting.

Councillor Mrs Bateson commented that each of the ten neighbourhood Plans were given £20,000 to develop their plan to the point of resident consultation. In Ascot and the Sunnings the council had invested into refurbishment of Victory Field, a new roundabout at the Berystede crossroads and improvements in Sunningdale High Street. Councillor Mrs Bateson commented that these were tough times for local authorities, however all had to share the burden to get the country back to stability. The council had made savings through efficiencies, smarter working and listening to residents. Where other councils were making cuts, the borough had been prudent and was still able to open new buildings such as schools and libraries.

Councillor Saunders stated that the budget added to the success of the administration. Despite the efforts of the opposition achievements had been made in the absence of any major concerns. The deployment of a ringfenced budget was actually a Liberal Democrat approach, for example the pupil premium.

Councillor Ed Wilson commented that the pupil premium was one of the most important figures in the budget as it helped schools bridge the gap in attainment. A condition of the funding was that schools were required to tell the council how they were using the funding and how effective it was. Unfortunately not all schools provided this level of reporting. He suggested a conference of schools be convened to discuss how the money was spent, reported and recorded. The Children's Overview and Scrutiny Panel regularly called on schools to come forward and tell the Panel what they were doing with the money. In relation to Dedworth, Councillor Ed Wilson highlighted the new park and AstroTurf. He called the budget a 'builder's budget'.

Councillor Beer stated that the opposition was very constructive and highlighted the work in conjunction with colleagues on Overview and Scrutiny Panels. He commented that in the first two years of the administration council tax had risen, but all the focus was on the following six years. He agreed with the comments of Councillor Rayner in relation to funding for the Lower Thames Scheme. Councils were being asked to provide funding to deal with discharge from higher up the Thames in the Cotswolds, therefore he felt this should be a national charge. The planning department was under staffed and was not able to cope with the number of applications coming in. The Local Plan was getting on for a being a year out of date as it had not been adequately

resourced. The council was therefore losing out on CIL. Nothing had been done about potential housing problems related to the extra runway at Heathrow. In relation to the Stafferton Way contract, it had been said this was complete yet works were still ongoing. There were claims in the background that costs were above contract price. The project was not on time or budget.

Councillor Rayner commented that the Stafferton way Link Road had been 30 years in the planning, and was now delivered. Some changes had been needed during construction due to requests from residents. This included making the bridge wider for the Waterways project, extra lighting and improved sound barriers. The project may therefore be slightly over budget but a road had been built that councils for decades had not achieved.

The Lead Member for Finance commented that he liked campaigning because residents could see the product of the council's hard work. He had moved to the borough 25 years ago, bought a house and brought up his family. The council's aim was to give others the opportunity to do the same, including the facilitating of the building of homes. The council had spent more money to protect the most vulnerable last year and would continue to do the same. He proposed an additional recommendation to award Willows Mobile Home Park an additional grant of £8125 to improve disabled facilities at the social club. He highlighted the cumulative savings for the council tax payer over the last seven years as detailed on page 246 of the report. The council was expanding popular schools and opening new schools so that every child could have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential. The local government settlement had caused huge distress in some councils. Some had had to go cap in hand or state they would have to close services. The borough was instead able to put the transition funding into the Development Fund.

Councillor Mrs Jones reiterated the issues she required a commitment on, to determine how she would vote on the budget. The Lead Member responded that it was for Mrs Jones to make her mind up how to vote.

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

RESOLVED: That:

- i. That the detailed recommendations contained in Appendix A, which includes a Council Tax at band D of £906.95, be approved.**
- ii. That an Adult Social Care Levy of £1.191m be included in the Council's budget proposals, this levy being equivalent to £18.14 at band D.**
- iii. That Fees and Charges as contained in Appendix B be approved.**
- iv. That the Capital Programme shown in Appendices C and D be adopted by the Council for the year commencing April 2016.**

- v. **That responsibility is delegated to the Cabinet Prioritisation Sub Committee to identify specific scheme budgets for the Highway Maintenance programmes as soon as project specifications have been completed.**
- vi. **That authority is delegated to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Lead Members for Finance and for Adult Services and Health to add up to a further £325k to the budget for Disabled Facilities Grant once demand for those grants has been established and to add a £325k increase in Disabled Facilities Grant to the Better Care Fund (see paragraph 3.40).**
- vii. **That the prudential Borrowing limits set out in Appendix L are approved.**
- viii. **That Council is asked to note the Business Rate tax base calculation detailed in Appendix P (to follow) and its use in the calculation of the Council Tax Requirement in Appendix A.**
- ix. **That the Head of Finance in consultation with Lead Members for Finance and Education, is authorised to amend the Total Schools Budget, to reflect actual Dedicated Schools Grant levels.**
- x. **That the Head of Finance in consultation with Lead Members for Finance and Education, the Managing Director and Strategic Director for Adult, Children and Health Services and the School Forum is authorised to approve subsequent allocation of the Schools Budget in accordance with the 2016/17 funding formula and the Schools Finance and Early Years Regulations 2015.**
- xi. **That responsibility to include the precept from the Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority in the overall Council Tax charges is delegated to the Lead Member for Finance and Head of Finance as soon as the precept is announced.**
- xii. **That the revision to the Council's Minimum Revenue Policy set out in paragraph 3.43 be approved.**
- xiii. **That Willows Mobile Home Park be awarded an additional grant of £8125 to improve disabled facilities at the social club.**

(44 Councillors voted in favour of the motion: Michael Airey, Natasha Airey, Malcolm Alexander, Christine Bateson, Hashim Bhatti, Phillip Bicknell, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, David Burbage, Gerald Clark, John Collins, David Coppinger, Carwyn Cox, Simon Dudley, David Evans, Lilly Evans, Jesse Grey, Geoffrey Hill, David Hilton, Charles Hollingsworth, Maureen Hunt, Mohammed Ilyas, Richard Kellaway, John Lenton, Sayonara Luxton, Ross McWilliams, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Eileen Quick, Jack Rankin, Colin Rayner, Samantha Rayner, Wesley Richards, MJ Saunders, Hari Sharma, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John

Story, Claire Stretton, Lisa Targowska, Derek Wilson, Ed Wilson and Lynda Yong. 1 Councillor, Malcolm Beer, voted against of the motion. Two Councillors, Lynne Jones and Simon Werner, abstained.)

34. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Question submitted by Councillor Beer to Councillor D Wilson, Lead Member for Planning

An Airports Commission Report stated a Heathrow Third Runway would generate 112,400 jobs needing 70,400 new houses, 5,000 in RBWM. Please explain the appalling failures to inform residents about the enormous problems this would create above the 12,000 homes we are already struggling to accommodate, and why no objection has been made to the Commission or Parliament?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that Councillor Beer had long requested this in standing up for the borough in relation to Heathrow. The council had been at the front of campaigning. As a leading member of 2M, the council had made a strong and co-ordinated challenge to the third runway at every step. This had intensified since the deeply flawed report had been published. Following this a detailed technical critique had been sent to all MPs, expressing the report's weaknesses. Ministers had been lobbied through joint correspondence and submitted to committee. The council was determined to do all it could to prevent expansion.

Councillor Beer, by way of a supplementary, commented that there was concern that the bodies mentioned had been challenged on air quality and noise but not on infrastructure. He would like to see a joint submission against runway three on the grounds of the stress on the housing structure. He asked if the Lead Member would agree?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that he would like to look at the information Councillor Beer had before moving forward. The council would continue to lobby the government. He had had conversations with the other Berkshire authorities in the reference group.

Councillors C Rayner and S Rayner left the room for the duration of the discussion on this question

Question submitted by Councillor Rayner to Councillor Cox, Lead Member for Environmental Services

What progress is the Royal Borough Council making in installing dust, pollution and noise monitoring devices in the area of a Waste Transfer Station in Hythe End Wraysbury?

Councillor Cox responded that Royal Borough officers were actively investigating noise and dust complaints associated with the operation of a concrete crusher on the site in question. Officers were undertaking visits to the area of the site to assess noise levels. Using noise recording equipment in this location could be difficult due to the high ambient noise levels and other noise sources in the location, for example it would be very difficult to determine that recorded noise, without the officer being present to hear it at the time, was attributable to the activity in question. The Environment

Agency was investigating noise complaints from activity on the site generally that was covered by the Environmental Permit.

Council officers were also investigating dust complaints when they undertook their visits. The Environment Agency notified residents in their newsletter of 26 November 2015 that they had installed a dust monitoring unit near to the site. This was a six month study so would conclude in May 2016.

Councillor Rayner, by way of a supplementary, asked for updates on actions over the last 12 months in writing that he could send to residents.

Councillor Cox agreed to provide this.

Question submitted by Councillor Rayner to Councillor D. Wilson, Lead Member for Planning

If the RBWM was to receive incontrovertible evidence that the original Certificate of Lawful Use for Hythe End Farm was applied for unlawfully, what steps would the council take?

Councillor D. Wilson responded that he was aware of the concerns from local residents regarding the site and understood that the planning enforcement team had been involved alongside other colleagues in environmental protection and highways. A Certificate of Lawfulness was issued in 1998 for the storage and processing of materials; the certificate was based on evidence submitted by the applicant to support the fact that the use had been continuing for a 10 year period before the application was submitted.

S193(7) Town and Country Planning Act 1990 permitted a local planning authority to revoke a certificate granted under s191 or 192 where:

- (a) a statement was made or document used which was false in a material particular;
- or
- (b) any material information was withheld.

No compensation was payable in the event of revocation and the site may be subject to enforcement action.

It would be necessary for the Council to consider if a false statement had been made in light of any information provided. It would therefore be necessary to review the old file to which the certificate related as well as the evidence submitted to the Council relating to the site. To comply with s193(7)(a) the LPA must identify precisely the statements said to be false when revoking the certificate. There was no provision to appeal to the Secretary of State the LPA's decision to revoke but the decision may be judicially reviewed. The decision could therefore be contested in the High Court on the grounds that the LPA has acted unreasonably in making the decision to revoke the certificate. Any court action must commence within three months from the date of the decision. Court costs may be incurred and depending on the outcome of any case the Council may be liable to pay the other side's costs.

Councillor Rayner, by way of a supplementary, requested this be put in writing to that he could pass it to residents

Councillor D. Wilson responded that this could be provided.

Question submitted by Councillor Lenton to Councillor Coppinger, Lead Member for Adult Services & Health

Following Berkshire East PCT's failure to implement the provision of a replacement surgery in Wraysbury, promised in 2006, and the PCT's subsequent withdrawal of support for the minor ailments scheme, would the Lead Member please confirm that the Council will vigorously oppose any proposed down grading of the Pharmacy service in Wraysbury to the residents of Horton and Wraysbury.

Councillor Coppinger responded that pharmacies were an essential part of the provision of health services to residents. Over the last few years their role had increased complementing the work of General Practitioners and the Public Health team. The pharmacy at Wraysbury was commissioned by the Borough to provide 3 essential services to residents in addition of course to services commissioned by the NHS. He was aware that a review of the services provided by pharmacies was being undertaken with the objective of greater integration of health providers. There was a consultation currently in progress, which would inform the final proposal. At the moment there were no proposals to close any pharmacy although he realised that the review had caused considerable anxiety. He reassured residents of both Wraysbury and anywhere else within the Borough that should a pharmacy come under threat the council would vigorously oppose it using all powers and influence that it had. He had met with the owners of the pharmacy and agreed to share information so that he could be in the best possible situation.

Councillor Lenton, by way of a supplementary, asked if the Lead Member was aware that the pharmacy in Wraysbury provided a delivery of prescriptions to infirm residents. If the pharmacy were closed residents would have to travel up to 5 miles away to a pharmacy in Datchet.

Councillor Coppinger responded that he was aware and would take this into account if he needed to present a case to protect the pharmacy.

Question submitted by Councillor D Evans to Councillor D Wilson, Lead Member for Planning

Could the Lead Member inform me as to how many residential dwellings (houses, flats, and apartments) were completed in the Royal Borough in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015?

Councillor D. Wilson responded with the following figures:

- 2011/12 – 177 residential units
- 2012/13 – 193 residential units
- 2013/14 – 360 residential units
- 2014/15 – 514 residential units

Councillor D. Evans confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question.

Question submitted by Councillor E Wilson to Councillor Cox, Lead Member for Environmental Services

Will the Lead Member join the Dedworth Spring Day on Saturday 5th March?

Councillor Cox responded that he was more than happy to accept and would be attending the event in March.

Councillor E. Wilson, by way of a supplementary, asked the Lead Member to take away any learnings from the day to replicate at events year on year.

Councillor Cox responded that he would be happy to do so.

Question submitted by Councillor Rankin to Councillor Rayner, Lead Member for Highways and Transport

The residents of Frances Road have collected a petition expressing concerns about traffic speeds and vibration to houses in Frances Road and have requested the introduction of effective traffic calming. Can the Lead Member please give a commitment that the petition will be fully considered and traffic calming options be prepared for consideration by the Residents' and Ward Members?

Councillor Rayner responded that he would be pleased to deliver a better parking system for residents in Frances Road. He had asked officers to examine the concerns about vibrations. Frances Road was due to be resurfaced in the new financial year. He pledged to work with Ward councillors and residents to come up with options.

Councillor Rankin confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question

Question submitted by Councillor Grey to Councillor Ms Stretton, Principal Member for Culture and Communities

Will the Lead Member investigate the state of the Royal Plaques on Victoria Bridge and Albert Bridge which are in need of some attention, as many residents and visitors pass these on the bridges?

Councillor Stretton responded that she had already identified on the Victoria Bridge that there were coat of arm plaques and some construction information plaques. On the Albert bridge there were plaques on the pier on either side. Therefore there may be 6 or 8 plaques which would need to be phased in a certain order. She had agreed with the Mayor for her to arrange an opportunity for relevant officers to meet with Ward and Lead Members and potential partners to discuss the need to refurbish the bridge plaques. Once a clear understanding of the extent of the renovation required was obtained, appropriate sources of funding for the works would be explored along with a suitable timeline.

Councillor Grey confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question.

At this point in the meeting, and in accordance with Rule of Procedure Part 4A 23.1 of the Council's Constitution, the Mayor called for a vote in relation to whether or not the meeting should continue, as the time had exceeded 10.00pm.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the meeting continue past 10.00pm.

36. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

By Councillor D. Wilson

Councillor D. Wilson introduced his motion. He explained that the council was concerned at the proposal by Post Office Ltd. to either close or put out to franchise the service in Maidenhead High Street. The issue was beyond politics and he urged all to sign up to the petition on the council's website. With other smaller branches closing the main Post Office was needed, particularly in light of demographic changes.

Councillor Ilyas stated that the closure or franchising out would have a substantial effect on the community. The Post Office had recently completed a consultation in Furze Platt to move the post office to another location and reduce services. The communication about this consultation referred residents to use the main Post office in Maidenhead if services were reduced.

Councillor Hill commented that one third of small businesses used the Post Office every week. A study in Essex assessed the impact of a Post Office closure, which resulted in small businesses losing 25% of turnover. He requested the opposition direct people to the petition on the council's website. He also asked the press to publicise the link to the petition.

Councillor Brimacombe commented that the council had been told the post office in Maidenhead was uneconomic yet there had been no transparency in their calculations.

Councillor Werner stated that all were in agreement that it would be ridiculous to close the Post Office in Maidenhead or move it to another location. There was very high internet usage in the borough but not all elderly residents were able or willing to use it therefore the Post Office was a vital service. He had heard a rumour that the Post Office were deliberately trying to cause queues on the branch to stop people wanting to go there. The Post Office was located at the quiet end of the High Street and its closure would be drastic on the businesses there. Councillor Werner was happy to recommend people to go to the council's e-petition. He was aware there was already one of over 2000 signatures in the Post Office itself. He suggested all be encouraged to sign each other's petitions.

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

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council expresses concern at the loss of services that are currently to the local community, which will be a loss, and will press the Post Office to rethink their decision.

By Councillor Smith:

Councillor Smith introduced his motion. He explained that in 2002 councils had been prohibited from using 30mph repeaters and roundels. This general prohibition had come about as a result of case law as it was difficult to gain convictions if some roads had the signs and others did not. Nationally the problem of speeding in 30mph areas had declined however the DfT stated that 45% of drivers still speeded. In his ward there were long straight roads in semi-rural areas that were a particular problem.

Councillor E Wilson endorsed the comments of Councillor Smith. He commented that people often said they were not aware of the speed limit in roads they used everyday. It was absurd that the council could not put up signs.

Councillor M. Airey supported the motion, referring to a problem road in his ward (Tinkers Lane) that suffered from speeding day and night.

Councillor Werner commented that the DfT had said drivers should be aware of the limit based on the distance between lights on a road, however they were often not on both sides.

It was proposed by Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor E. Wilson and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council writes to the Minister of State, asking him to scrap this regulation, clarify the law, and delegate to local authorities like Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead the power to put up 30mph repeaters and roundels where they are needed.

Councillors C Rayner and S Rayner left the meeting at this point.

37. 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 items 15-16 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.