

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2019 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.45 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Julian McGhee-Sumner, Stuart Munro, John Halsall, Anthony Pollock, Parry Bath, Pauline Jorgensen, Simon Weeks and Philip Mirfin

Other Councillors Present

Rachel Burgess

Gary Cowan

Andy Croy

Lindsay Ferris

Clive Jones

Angus Ross

Chris Smith

Shahid Younis

Philip Houldsworth

Malcolm Richards

Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

78. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted from Councillor Pauline Helliar-Symons.

Councillor Shahid Younis attended the meeting on behalf of Councillor Helliar-Symons. In accordance with legislation Councillor Younis could take part in any discussions but was not entitled to vote.

79. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 29 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Leader of Council.

80. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillors Julian McGhee-Sumner and Stuart Munro declared personal interests in Agenda Item 84 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that they were unpaid Non-Executive Directors of WBC Holdings Ltd. Councillors McGhee-Sumner and Munro remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor Philip Mirfin declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 84 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that he was an unpaid Non-Executive Director of Optalis Holdings Ltd. Councillor Mirfin remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

Councillor Anthony Pollock declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 84 Shareholders' Report by virtue of the fact that he was a paid Non-Executive Director of Optalis Holdings Ltd. Councillor Pollock remained in the meeting during discussions and voted on the matter.

81. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 2) the estimated general fund budget carry forwards of £575k identified at this stage be noted;
- 3) the updates on Adult Social Services' and Children Services' action plans be noted;
- 4) a supplementary estimate of £100k in 18/19 for "Optalis IT business case feasibility study" be approved;
- 5) a supplementary estimate of £200k in 18/19 for "HRA void costs" be approved.

85. CAPITAL MONITORING 2018/19 - END OF DECEMBER 2018

The Executive considered a report setting out the quarter three position of the Capital budget.

When introducing the report the Executive Member for Finance reminded Members that the outturn of the spending profile was often different from the actual budget and this was mainly due to the fact that there were often issues that arose during a project which meant that changes had to be made which would sometimes result in a project being delayed.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the quarter three position for the Capital budget, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- 2) the new budget adjustments in the Capital Programme for 2018/19, as set out in Appendix B to the report, including the additional £1,177,000 grant received from the Department of Transport for Highways Maintenance, be noted and approved;
- 3) the new budget virements in the Capital Programme which constitutes a change of use, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be noted and approved.

86. SHAREHOLDERS' REPORT

(Councillors Julian McGhee-Sumner, Philip Mirfin, Stuart Munro and Anthony Pollock declared personal interests in this item)

The Executive considered a report which provided an update on the performance and progress of those subsidiary companies that the Council had a controlling shareholder interest in.

The Executive Member for Finance highlighted a number of achievements that the companies had made which included the provision of housing and property development, the redevelopment of some adult social care facilities as well as new social housing facilities. As an example Councillor Pollock made reference to a piece of waste land in Shinfield which had previously been the subject of antisocial behaviour. With residents' support the area had been developed to provide much needed affordable housing. He asked Members to let him know if they became aware of any other pieces of land that might be suitable for social housing.

In relation to Optalis Councillor Pollock stated how impressed he had been with the new partnership with Windsor and Maidenhead which had led to a reduction in the turnover of

staff, improved staff satisfaction and had improved the delivery and quality of services to residents.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the budget monitoring position for the month ending 30 November 2018 be noted;
- 2) the operational update for the period to 31 December 2018 be noted.

87. DELIVERING THE GORSE RIDE REGENERATION PROJECT - COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER (CPO)

The Executive considered a report seeking approval to proceed with the making of a compulsory purchase order (CPO) to achieve the comprehensive regeneration of the Gorse Ride estate.

The Executive Member with responsibility for Housing went through the report and advised that the intention was to establish a compulsory purchase order which would enable the voluntary or compulsory acquisition of all the necessary third party land interests to bring forward comprehensive regeneration of the Gorse Ride estate. The compulsory purchase order would provide certainty with regard to the site assembly and demonstrate the Council's commitment to rejuvenating the area.

Councillor Weeks stated that he was very pleased that the redevelopment of the area was being taken forward and hoped that the existence of a CPO would ensure that most acquisitions could be achieved voluntarily. He was also pleased to note that the redevelopment was supported by the majority of residents and had the support of the Tenant and Landlord Improvement Panel. Councillor Weeks highlighted the community spirit that existed in the area and advised that the Council was doing its utmost to ensure this was maintained as the new development progressed.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the considerable progress already underway to support the rehousing of tenants and homeowners on the Gorse Ride estate be noted;
- 2) the in principle use of a CPO to acquire all property interests (the extent of which is shown indicatively edged red on the plan in Appendix 1) required to deliver the Gorse Ride Regeneration Project be authorised;
- 3) Council Officers continue to negotiate the acquisition by agreement of all third party interests in the land in advance of confirmation of a CPO;
- 4) the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Executive Members with responsibility for Housing and Finance, be authorised to take all necessary steps required for the making, confirmation and implementation of the CPO, including securing the appointment of an external specialist CPO adviser to prepare all necessary documents required to support this process, including statements of reasons and requisite statutory notices;
- 5) the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Executive Members with responsibility for Housing and Finance, be authorised to make General Vesting Declarations (GVDs) under the Compulsory Purchase (Vesting Declarations) Act

1981 and / or serve notice to treat and notices of entry (if required) following confirmation of the CPO.

88. CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Executive considered the Chief Finance Officer's report which provides Members with information that they are required to consider when setting the level of Council Tax.

The Executive Member for Finance when introducing the report highlighted a number of areas including the various challenges that the Council was facing e.g. low levels of Government funding, increases in the number of children requiring intervention and expensive specialist care, and a growing older population. As stated previously measures were being put in place to try and address these challenges.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) report and the issues contained within, including the local government finance settlement and the sections on key risks, be noted and consideration will be given to these when setting the council tax for 2019/20 and agreeing the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP);
- 2) the Council's response to the draft local government finance settlement, as set out in Appendix Two to the report, be supported;
- 3) the Council's ongoing representations for fairer funding for the residents of Wokingham Borough Council be noted.

89. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MID YEAR REPORT

The Executive considered a report relating to Treasury Management operations during the first six months of 2018/19.

The Executive Member for Finance when introducing the report stated the importance of the document which connected the Council's borrowing and investment with the prudential guidance indicators which showed that the Council's financial position in respect of borrowings and investments was soundly managed and soundly based. Councillor Pollock highlighted a number of areas in the report which included the fact that the Council had borrowed less in the first half of the year than was planned, the level of borrowing that was being repaid and investments that were being made in council housing stock.

The Leader of Council highlighted the fact that the £95m, previously borrowed as part of the HRA account, had been reduced to £79.8m which was particularly pleasing given that at the same time the Council was investing in its housing stock.

In response to a query about whether the Executive Member was concerned about the Council's level of borrowing Councillor Pollock responded that he was not concerned as the money that the Council held in assets, both in terms of housing stock and the town centre, would be valued approximately double the level of borrowing. In addition the investment portfolio was worth more than the Council had invested in it and the carrying costs were lower than the rental income which was based on sound, long term tenants.

RESOLVED that: