

MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**EXECUTIVE**

held on 17 June 2021  
Present:

Cllr A Azad (Chairman)  
Cllr S Ashall (Vice-Chair)

Cllr K M Davis            Cllr D Harlow  
Cllr G W Elson            Cllr C S Kemp

Also Present: Councillors T Aziz, A-M Barker, W P Forster, K Howard, D E Hughes, I Johnson and M I Raja.

**1. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 25 March 2021 and 24 May 2021 be approved and signed as true and correct records.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**3. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor A Azad declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor K M Davis declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D Harlow declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor C S Kemp declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Julie Fisher, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mrs Fisher could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Peter Bryant, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mr Bryant could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Finance, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mrs Clarke could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Planning, Giorgio Framalico, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mr Framalico could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, Geoff McManus, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mr McManus could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Housing, Louise Strongitharm, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mrs Strongitharm could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Finance, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning Woking Football Club and/or the GolDev Woking Limited development. The interest arose from (i) her husband having a small shareholding in Woking Football Club and (ii) being a Council-appointed director of Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited. The interest was such that Mrs Clarke could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Peter Bryant, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning Woking Football Club and/or the GolDev Woking Limited development. The interest arose from (i) him being a member of the Cards Trust (the supporters' club for Woking Football Club), (ii) providing occasional unpaid assistance to Woking Football Club, e.g. acting as returning officer at the election of directors and (iii) being a Council-appointed director of Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited. The interest was such that Mr Bryant could advise the Executive on those items.

## **5. PETITION - DAVID LLOYD HEALTH AND FITNESS CENTRE EXE21-048**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Azad, reported that a petition had been submitted in accordance with the Council's scheme for dealing with petitions, requesting that the Council retain the David Lloyd Health and Fitness Centre in Kingfield.

The petition contained 104 confirmed signatures and 5 unconfirmed signatures in the following terms:

“We the undersigned petition Woking Borough Council to Keep David Lloyd private health and fitness club in Kingfield and off Greenfield land at Egley Road.

Woking Borough Council, as landowner and leaseholder of David Lloyd club in Kingfield and landowner at the proposed new site at Egley Road, we, members of David Lloyd and /or local Woking residents, implore you to keep David Lloyd in Kingfield for the following reasons and not terminate their lease:

David Lloyd does not need to move. It is newly refurbished with state of the art Blaze studios and new courts. The move is purely to facilitate an over-development of Kingfield, in the interests of Woking FC and not David Lloyd members (over 3k).

- It provides great amenity value for the residents of South Woking and beyond who walk as well as drive to the club.
- The new Greenfield site at Egley cannot be justified as the best use of this land, whilst also being right next to Woking Council's own Sport Box new gym.
- It will displace a significant amount of traffic/cars to Egley Road as the club has over 3000 members. This is not environmentally friendly as almost all members will have to drive to the Egley road location.
- The proposed new facilities are not in the majority of the members best interests as there are fewer tennis courts and a likely membership fee hike.

Thank you for your consideration.”

The Leader welcomed the Petitioner, Mr Jeremy Instone, to the meeting. The Petitioner spoke in support of the petition. Discussion ensued on the development agreement between the Council and GolDev signed on 30 January 2019 and which had been published on the website. In light of the decision made by the Planning Committee and defended recently by the Council at appeal, the Executive noted the petition and acknowledged that it would be contrary to the opinion of many residents if the David Lloyd move were to happen. However, the Council was only the landowner at David Lloyd and could not stop the club or those controlling it from seeking to move and/or applying for permissions in the future. Additionally, it could not make a recommendation that any agreements previously entered into should be broken.

#### RESOLVED

- That (i) in light of the decision made by the Planning Committee and defended recently by the Council at appeal, the Executive notes the petition and acknowledges that it would be contrary to the opinion of many residents if the David Lloyd move were to happen; and
- (ii) however, the Council is only the landowner at David Lloyd and cannot stop the club or those controlling it from seeking to move and/or applying for permissions in the future. Additionally, it cannot make a recommendation that any agreements previously entered into should be broken.

Reason: To agree a response to the petition.

**6. PETITION - LOAN AGREEMENT WITH GOLDEV WOKING LIMITED EXE21-054**

The Leader reported that a petition had been submitted in accordance with the Council's scheme for dealing with petitions, requesting that the Council appoint an oversight committee to determine if there had been material breaches of the £250m Loan Agreement with GolDev Woking Ltd.

The petition contained 115 confirmed signatures and 9 unconfirmed signatures in the following terms:

"We the undersigned petition Woking Borough Council to Appoint an oversight committee to determine if the Loan Agreement with Goldev Woking Ltd should be voided.

We ask that Woking Borough Council appoint an oversight committee to determine if there have been material breaches of the £250m Loan Agreement with Goldev Woking Ltd.

The reason for this request is that there have been two changes that appear to be in breach of the Loan Agreement. Council Tax payers have tried eliciting replies from WBC Finance Department however the department repeated fails to reply.

The material changes to be considered are a) the ownership of the Borrower "Goldev Woking Ltd" has changed materially since the Loan Agreement was struck and appears to breach "18.6 Material adverse changes" b) in breach of the Loan Agreement Section 19.9 Goldev Woking Ltd has taken on board Security with Frith Holdings Ltd. The only security should be WBC acting as the only beneficiary in the event of difficulties.

As stated above in light of this we ask that an oversight committee be appointed and if they feel appropriate that the Loan Agreement is voided."

The Petitioner, Mr Jeremy Instone, spoke in support of the petition. The Leader advised that Officers had set out in their report the reasons why it was not believed that the Loan Agreement with GolDev Woking Limited had been breached. However, the Leader stated that the Executive was happy to appoint a task group to examine this advice in detail. It was suggested that a task group be set up consisting of three Executive Members and chaired by an independent member. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would also be invited to attend the task group.

The Leader thanked Mr Instone for attending the meeting and presenting both petitions.

RESOLVED

That (i) the petition be noted; and

(ii) a task group be appointed to examine the advice of Officers in detail.

Reason: To agree a response to the petition.

## 7. QUESTIONS

The Chairman reported that a question had been submitted by Mr Robert Shatwell under Section 3 of the Executive Procedure Rules regarding contractual appointments of the former Chief Executive. A copy of the question together with the reply was before the Executive. The Chairman advised that Mr Shatwell would be sent a copy of the reply to his question.

## 8. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR L LYONS - CONSTRUCTION SITE NOISE LIMITS EXE21-050

At its meeting on 11 February 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

### Councillor L Lyons

“In accordance with the Control of Pollution Act (Noise) 1974, construction sites operating in Woking must currently limit site noise to the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday, 08:00 and 13:00 on Saturday and not at all on Sunday, with no noise permitted to be audible from the site boundary outside of those hours.

- (i) These times are to be confirmed as a matter of Council policy, and any review of, or amendments to, these times must be determined by the Council.
- (ii) Any permission to vary from these times may only be granted to an applicant with the permission of the Planning Committee.
- (iii) Any such permission by the Planning Committee will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and for a limited and specified period.
- (iv) Permission to vary these times on a single occasion, for a maximum period of one day, may be granted by relevant Officers under delegated powers. Subsequent applications, or applications for longer than one day, must be considered by the Planning Committee.
- (v) On all such instances of permission to vary from these times being granted, residents likely to be affected will be notified by post.
- (vi) Works deemed to be an emergency will continue to be exempt from these restrictions.”

The Executive considered the Motion at its meeting on 25 March 2021 and recommended to Council that the Motion be not supported. At Council on 8 April 2021, it was resolved that the Motion be deferred to enable it to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 June 2021 and the Executive on 17 June 2021 with a view to the matter being brought back to Council on 29 July 2021. Attention was drawn to a supplementary report which set out the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration by the Executive. The Executive welcomed both the measures proposed within the report, and those recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the measures as proposed within the report, together with the measures recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out below, be adopted.**

- i) Ward Councillors to be consulted where a Prior Consent Notice has been submitted requesting noisy works outside of usual hours, to the extent this is practically possible, before a decision is made;**
- ii) a quarterly report be prepared and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee providing details of noise complaints received; and**
- iii) the communication with local residents on upcoming noisy works be improved by the use of the Council website and social media, ensuring consistency of the use of direct communication to local residents such as letters and door knocks.**

Reason: To consolidate existing arrangements.

**9. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR W FORSTER - GREEN FLAG AWARD EXE21-041**

At its meeting on 8 April 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor W Forster

“This Council notes that more people than normal have enjoyed spending time in Woking’s parks since the first national lockdown was ordered due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Council acknowledges that one of the Borough’s open spaces, Brookwood Cemetery, has been granted a Green Flag Award, whereas in neighbouring Guildford Borough, ten of their parks have Green Flag Awards. The Council notes that our parks could be better managed for the residents who use them, the environment and future of our Borough.

Accordingly, this Council resolves to ask Officers to investigate how to improve the Borough’s parks and open spaces so more would be eligible for a Green Flag Award and enable local people to enjoy their leisure time in better public spaces.”

Councillor Forster attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. The Executive noted that the current environmental maintenance contract would come to an end in March 2023 and that there would be an opportunity to prepare the new tender specification with the Green Flag Award criteria in mind. It was noted that there would be associated costs involved with Green Flag aspirations. In the interim, Officers advised that standards of the Borough’s open spaces could be looked at. Regarding resources, the Executive was informed that there was flexibility in the current contract. The possibility of community involvement in any future Green Flag applications was suggested.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion be supported.**

**10. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR M RAJA - BROOKWOOD CEMETERY BURIAL CHARGES EXE21-042**

At its meeting on 8 April 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor M Raja

“The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a massive increase in deaths across the country, with 20% more deaths registered from March 2020 to the end of the year than would be expected under pre-pandemic conditions.

Since Woking Borough Council has taken over Brookwood cemetery, the effective costs for burials have gone up, putting further strain on families who’ve lost loved ones in these difficult times. We are not offering local residents discounts on burial charges, a scheme that is common in many local authorities.

Due to the high death toll from COVID and the consideration that many families have lost multiple family members, this council will

- i) Reconsider the burial charges it has introduced to the cemetery
- ii) Introduce a system offering a discount to local taxpayers, as is common among many parishes.”

Councillor Raja attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. The Executive noted that fees and charges for interment at Brookwood Cemetery had not increased for six years following the Council’s purchase of the historic site. The Leader advised that the fees and charges were determined by Brookwood Park Limited and its Board, and if it wished, the Board could undertake a competitor analysis of burial charges. The Leader further advised that the Council had invested significant capital and revenue funds to restore the Cemetery. The Executive was not supportive of Cllr Raja’s Motion and agreed an amended Motion to read as follows:

“The Council notes that since Woking Borough Council has taken over Brookwood Cemetery, the initial charges introduced in 1 August 2015 have been frozen and the service provided by the cemetery to the Woking community has conspicuously improved.

Therefore the Council:

- i) expresses its appreciation of the frozen charges from 2015 and encourages the board of Brookwood Cemetery to freeze in 2022/3 for 50 years Exclusive Right of Burial, including the establishment of free resident infant graves;
- ii) notes the system offering a discount to local taxpayers in both the south and the north cemetery; and
- iii) is happy to offer both i) and ii) despite the increasing pressure on Council finances and the need to generate income to fund services.”

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion, as amended by the Executive, be supported.**

**11. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR M RAJA - SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE PLANNING AND OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES EXE21-043**

At its meeting on 8 April 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor M Raja

“In the past year, members of the Planning Committee have worked diligently, and under great pressure, in upholding Woking planning policy and responding to residents’ views and concerns.

Similarly, over the past few years, the task group members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee have produced important work in leading the effort to review council practices in the face of strong opposition and denial; and eventually had their concerns vindicated by the report from the external investigation.

Given the exemplary work of both the Planning and O&S Committee in the past year, this council commends and thanks them for their commitment to democracy and their service to the residents of Woking and calls for providing the right support to these committees as and when needed.”

Councillor Raja spoke in support of the Motion. Following a question regarding Dr Edila’s recommendations following her independent investigation into the Woking Football Club and associated developments, the Leader confirmed that an update, which would include the recommended appointment of a part-time Scrutiny Officer, would be received at Council on 29 July 2021. The Leader commended the work of all the Council’s Committees and various working groups over the past year. The Executive was not supportive of Cllr Raja’s Motion and agreed an amended Motion to read as follows:

“In the past year, the need for training to support Members of all parties who serve on all committees has been highlighted by the nature of remote working. This Council agrees that in respect of officer time, training and resources, all committees of the Council should be supported properly and expresses its appreciation that training and support for committee chairs has already been put in train by this administration.”

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion, as amended by the Executive, be supported.**

**12. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR T AZIZ - PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (HIF) SCHEME EXE21-044**

At its meeting on 8 April 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor T Aziz

“While we fully believe in development, improvement and raising Woking’s profile it seems odd and contrary to democratic principles that we do not consult public on major plans.

It strikes most odd that the council consulted on building 2180 homes, as in the DPD, but did not consult on 5000+ homes in the town center and simply wishes to adopt the HIF scheme.

This motion calls for:

- 1) The HIF scheme housing to be put to public consultation with full honest disclosures.
- 2) The council cease to make any further promises on HIF to any bodies until such consultation is complete.
- 3) The council re assess the scheme’s housing targets under new market conditions, (especially post COVID) public opinion and if needed is open to renegotiations with central government.”

Councillor Aziz attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. Attention was drawn to the comprehensive Officer comment and it was noted that there was no requirement for further promises in relation to HIF. Following a question regarding the details of the agreement with Homes England, Councillor Kemp advised that the Executive at its meeting on 6 February 2020, and Council at its meeting on 13 February 2020, had received a draft copy of the full agreement in Part II. Councillor Kemp advised that he had asked Officers to check whether there were any differences between the draft and final agreement.

The Leader stated that wider consultation on the town centre would take place through the Town Centre Masterplan process and that it would be appropriate to include the HIF scheme housing requirement as part of that consultation. It was noted that the development of the Masterplan was underway and would form a key element of the Council’s Big Conversation with all sectors of the community. In addition, the Council’s consultation on its Housing Strategy was currently live and all Members and residents were encouraged to submit their views.

The Executive was not supportive of Cllr Aziz’s Motion and agreed an amended Motion to read as follows:

“When the successful Housing Infrastructure Fund bid for £95m was made, the Council did not know it would succeed and therefore did not consult in detail on building the homes in the town centre afforded by the scheme.

In order to address this, this Council agrees:

- i) the HIF scheme housing requirement be part of the Town Centre Masterplan consultation;

This Council also notes:

- ii) the commitment already made by the Council as part of the HIF project; and
- iii) the housing numbers already agreed by the Government.”

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion, as amended by the Executive, be supported.**

**13. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR T AZIZ - REVIEW OF THE OPERATION OF WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S PLANNING DEPARTMENT EXE21-045**

At its meeting on 8 April 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor T Aziz

“In recent times, Woking Borough Council’s Planning Department has recommended a number of mega-development planning applications despite having major failures against Woking policy.

While many of the recommendations given were subsequently voted down by the Planning Committee, it should not fall to them to uphold council policy. Decisions such as the football club, Goldsworth Road plans and numerous others which contravene planning policy have resulted in public calling into question the impartiality and independence of the department. It is also not clear what advice was given to developers and if they were given to believe that they had realistic chances of success despite major breaches. Clarity is needed on how these decisions were made by planning department and the extent of contact of those heading the department with developers.

Thus, this council calls for a review of the operation of the planning department of Woking Borough Council, including the steps taken by planning officers to come to decisions where plans which contravened Woking Planning Policy were recommended, advice given to developers and an independent investigation into correspondence and links between LPA and developers.”

Following discussions between Councillor Aziz and Officers, attention was drawn to a supplementary report which set out an amended form of wording which removed reference to those Officers who head the planning department. The revised wording of the Motion reads as follows:

“In recent times, Woking Borough Council’s Planning Department has recommended approval of a number of mega-development planning applications. While many of the recommendations given were subsequently voted down by the Planning Committee, it should not fall to them to uphold council policy. Decisions such as the football club, Goldsworth Road plans and numerous others which have been refused by the Planning Committee have resulted in the public calling into question the role of the planning

department. It is also not clear what advice was given to developers and if they were given to believe that they had realistic chances of success despite the applications being refused. Clarity is needed on the role of the planning department.

Thus, this council calls for a review of the operation of the planning department of Woking Borough Council, including the steps taken by planning officers to come to recommendations where applications were refused by the Planning Committee, advice given to developers and an independent investigation into correspondence and whether there are any links between the LPA and developers.”

Councillor Aziz spoke in support of the revised Motion. The Executive acknowledged that planning was a complex process involving balancing Development Plan policies and material considerations. It was noted that Council policies applicable to planning applications were clearly noted in Planning Committee reports. Also, Officers arranged drop-in sessions in respect of large scale developments before consideration at Planning Committee. The Executive was in favour of an LGA-appointed review of the operation of the Council’s planning function which would include the steps taken by officers and Members to come to decisions in performing their professional and statutory duties.

The Executive was not supportive of Cllr Aziz’s Motion and agreed an amended Motion to read as follows:

“In recent times, Woking Borough Council’s Planning Department has recommended a number of planning applications subsequently voted down by the Planning Committee.

In addition, applications have been called in by Members and subsequently agreed by Councillors against officer advice even when previous refusals on identical schemes had already been issued – or enforced.

This Council calls for an LGA-appointed review of the operation of the planning function of Woking Borough Council, including the steps taken by officers and Members to come to decisions in performing their professional and statutory duties.”

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion, as amended by the Executive, be supported.**

**14. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR T AZIZ - INVESTIGATION INTO NEW VISION HOMES EXE21-046**

At its meeting on 8 April 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor T Aziz

“Over the past few years, New Vision Homes has repeatedly shown itself to be unable to deal with housing issues in the properties they manage.

We all know of the NVH tenant who tragically took her own life in 2016 after battling mental and physical health issues exacerbated by the regular flooding of her home over 13 years,

In recently The Housing Ombudsman judgement criticizes severe Maladministration in case case where an elderly resident is left without heating or hot water for 3 years and

council failed to take any appropriate action to resolve the situation and council has been fined £6000.

Thus, in light of some of the unacceptable failures in maintaining council properties, this motion calls for a thorough investigation into the causes of the failures, conducted by the chair of the O&S committee and a select cross-party panel appointed by the chair of O&S. This investigation will:

- I. Analyze the root causes of the failures.
- II. Hear from officers and portfolio holders, and
- III. Recommend steps going forward to ensure such events do not occur again.”

Following discussions between Councillor Aziz and Officers, attention was drawn to a supplementary report which set out an amended form of wording which addressed concerns of Officers. The revised wording of the Motion reads as follows:

“Over the past few years, New Vision Homes has repeatedly shown itself to be unable to deal with housing issues in the properties they manage.

Recently the Housing Ombudsman judgement criticizes severe Maladministration in a case where an elderly resident was left without heating or hot water for 3 years and council failed to take any appropriate action to resolve the situation and council has been fined £6000.

Thus, in light of these failures in maintaining council properties, this motion calls for the Council to learn from such cases as it plans its Housing Services for the period after the NVH contract ends in 2022. The lessons learnt, along with an improvement plan, should be reported to, and progress monitored through, the Housing Task Group to ensure that residents benefit from an improved service going forward.”

Councillor Aziz spoke in support of the amended Motion. The Executive supported the amended Motion and noted that an update would be received by the Housing Task Group in July 2021.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion, as amended, be supported.**

**15. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR M ALI - ELIGIBILITY OF RESIDENTS TO POSITIONS WITH THE COUNCIL AND RESIDENTS' PANEL EXE21-047**

At its meeting on 8 April 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor M Ali

“The report on Independent Directors of Subsidiaries (EXE21-010), discussed at the meeting of the Executive on 14 January 2021, stipulates that “Applicants will not qualify for the role of Independent Directors if they are politically active, either Party Political or in an active Protest Group or are conflicted by the nature of their employment or other activity.”

Under a free and functioning democracy, the term “Protest Group” is an egregious definition for residents of Woking who may not agree with the actions and decisions of Woking Borough Council. We should not discriminate against those who take an active interest in local matters merely because they are openly critical of the council.

Similarly, the questionnaire for applying for the council’s Residents’ Panel includes a “Satisfaction Survey” in which the resident has to present their view of the council, including if they agree with statements such as “I trust” WBC, or “ I support WBC to take the appropriate actions today that will benefit my area in the future”. Residents who disagree with these statements may be discouraged from applying as they may think that it will negatively impact their application, and thus contribute to a less diverse Residents Panel. Furthermore, whether or not the resident agrees with these statements should have no bearing on their suitability for the panel. Thus, the council

- I. Resolves that the view of any resident regarding planning policies or other council matters should not be used against them as criteria in determining their eligibility to positions within the council, including but not limited to directorships, resident panels and other bodies.
- II. Moves to delete the term ‘protest groups’ from the criteria and does not use it within WBC to define any residents.
- III. Will remove the requirement of filling out a “Satisfaction Survey” in an application to the Residents’ Panel.”

Councillor Aziz spoke in support of the Motion on behalf of Councillor Ali. The Executive noted the good response to the 10,000 Satisfaction Survey’s which had been sent to residents. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ashall, advised that a Satisfaction Survey was no longer a requirement when applying to the Residents’ Panel so iii) of the Motion was inaccurate. Regarding ii) of the Motion, the Executive was supportive of reviewing the term ‘protest groups’ ahead of the next round of appointments.

The Executive was not supportive of Cllr Ali’s Motion and agreed an amended Motion to read as follows:

“This Council should not discriminate against those who take an active interest in local matters merely because they are openly critical of the Council.

Thus, the Council:

- i) resolves that the view of any resident regarding planning policies or other Council matters should not be used against them as criteria in determining their eligibility to positions within the Council including, but not limited to, directorships, resident panels and other bodies; and
- ii) undertakes to review all criteria and terms used ahead of the next round of appointments.”

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion, as amended by the Executive, be supported.**

**16. RECOMMENDATION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP - FUTURE OF PLANET WOKING EXE21-039**

Councillor Davis, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, introduced a report which set out recommendations from the Climate Change Working Group in respect of funding for Planet Woking. The Executive heard that Planet Woking, which had launched in September 2020, had been well received and was an important awareness raising programme of the Council's work to date and future priorities for local climate and ecological action. It was highlighted that the South East Climate Alliance (SECA) had praised the programme. Councillor Howard, Chairman of the Climate Change Working Group, spoke in support of the recommendations and the importance of Planet Woking in continuing to engage with and encourage the public to make sustainable choices.

The Executive welcomed the report, and the Leader thanked both Councillor Davis and Councillor Howard for their leadership on local climate and ecological matters.

**RESOLVED**

That funding be identified, in this financial year and then through the next available Investment Programme to deliver Option 1 over the two year period July 2021-July 2023 at a total cost of £66,000 excl. VAT. In contractual terms, it is proposed that Air Social would be employed for one year, with an option to renew for a further year July 2022 to 2023.

Reason: To build on the success of the initial funded phase of Planet Woking, maintaining its profile and growth for a two further years, to continue public awareness of and engagement in local climate and ecological matters.

**17. RECOMMENDATION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP - RENEWABLE ENERGY PLAN EXE21-040**

Following the Council's climate and ecological emergency declaration on 25 July 2019, Councillor Davis, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, introduced a report which set out recommendations from the Climate Change Working Group regarding a Renewable Energy Plan. Councillor Howard, Chairman of the Climate Change Working Group, advised that the use of renewable energy would be the biggest step the Council could take to become carbon neutral across the Council's estate, and achieve Borough-wide carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest. Attention was drawn to page 80 of the Agenda Pack which set out a summary of actions.

Councillor Ashall, Portfolio Holder for Finance, was supportive of the proposals and requested that information on local community municipal bonds be brought to the Finance Task Group for discussion.

The Executive welcomed the report and commended the Green Infrastructure Team on their hard work on the Plan.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the Renewable Energy Plan be adopted;
- (ii) the potential to establish a local community municipal bond for the financing of local renewable energy projects be explored by the Director of Neighbourhood Services in consultation with (a) the Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, (b) the Director of Finance and (c) the Director of Legal and Democratic Services; and
- (iii) if a local community municipal bond for the financing of local renewable energy projects is considered feasible and beneficial, further report(s) be presented to the Executive/Council.

Reason In furtherance of the Council's climate and ecological emergency declaration, the Renewable Energy Plan sets out a range of actions to facilitate next steps to transition to net zero, through achieving greater proportions of locally generated renewable energy and decarbonisation of our local energy supplies.

**18. RECOMMENDATION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP - THE USE OF AUDIO, VIDEO OR WEB CONFERENCING FOR NON-STATUTORY MEETINGS EXE21-055**

The Executive received a report which set out a recommendation from the Climate Change Working Group regarding the continuation of remote non-statutory meetings where practical. The Executive welcomed the recommendation, noting the clear benefits for the Council's pledge to reduce carbon emissions as stated in its climate and ecological emergency declaration and associated action plan.

RESOLVED

That non-statutory meetings, should continue where practical, on a remote basis via audio, video or web-conferencing in line with the Council's pledge to reduce carbon emissions as stated in its climate and ecological emergency declaration and associated action plan.

Reason: The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan includes an action that seeks to avoid unnecessary travel to meetings where possible. The pandemic saw audio, video and web conferencing as a practical and successful way to conduct remote meetings. The Climate Change Working Group proposes that this should continue for non-statutory meetings.

**19. VICTORIA WAY CENTRAL RESERVE EXE21-058**

Following the update on the Victoria Square Project provided at Council on 11 February 2021, the Executive received a report which detailed further costings and programme information in relation to the project to refurbish and replant Victoria Way Central Reservation. Discussion ensued on the proposed planting of trees in the reservation and the potential impact on visibility and ongoing maintenance requirements. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Kemp, reassured Members that the Council's Arboricultural Team had been involved in the process and the maintenance of the reserve had been built into the Serco contract. It was noted that the Council had adopted a Tree Strategy which called for the right tree in the right place.

RESOLVED

That the project be agreed to proceed to implementation.

Reason: The Victoria Way central reserve requires refurbishing and replanting following the removal of the planting which was necessary as part of the improvement works including the installation of new street lighting associated with Victoria Square development.

**20. TOWN CENTRE SIGNAGE – WAYFINDING PROJECT EXE21-052**

The Executive received a report which sought approval to proceed with the implementation of the Woking Town Centre Wayfinding project. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Kemp, reported that Option 2 was recommended as it offered the best value and choice to users by providing a mix of digital and traditional wayfinding maps. The Executive was informed that it was proposed that the Victoria Way car park be renamed the Wells Car Park. Following a query regarding the names Victoria Place East and Victoria Place West and their locations, the Portfolio Holder commented that further discussion on the names could take place. Energy use was raised and it was highlighted that the digital signs would use energy efficient LEDs.

RESOLVED

That (i) the Woking Town Centre Wayfinding project be agreed to proceed to implementation; and

(ii) Option 2 be approved.

Reason: The signage in and around Woking town centre requires updating to take account of the changing town centre and the imminent opening of the Victoria Square development.

**21. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 - ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT AND IPSO REPORT EXE21-007**

The Executive received a report which considered the Council's use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ("RIPA") during the 2020 calendar year, and the inspection carried out by the Investigatory Powers Commission. Discussion ensued on the possible use of RIPA in relation to dealing with fly tipping. Officers advised that the use of mobile CCTV was expensive and that proposals could be brought forward for consideration. However Officers expressed a preference to use cameras with clear signage, rather than use RIPA powers. The Executive was advised of current investigations into fly tipping with and without the use of cameras. The Executive requested that in the event of successful prosecutions for fly tipping, the Council afforded those incidences full publicity.

RESOLVED

That (i) the Council's non-use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 during the 2020 calendar year; and

(ii) the inspection carried out by the Investigatory Powers Commission be noted.

Reason: To comply with the Council's RIPA policy and Home Office Codes of Practice.

**22. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION**

The Executive considered the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book) March 2021.

RESOLVED

That the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, March 2021, be received.

Reason: To manage the performance of the Council.

<p><b>This document was published on Friday 18 June 2021 and the decisions within it will be implemented on Monday 28 June 2021, subject to call-in.</b></p>
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The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.07 pm.

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_