

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WOKING

held on 30 November 2023

Present:

Cllr M I Raja (Mayor)
Cllr L Morales (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr A-M Barker	Cllr D Jordan
Cllr A Boote	Cllr A Kirby
Cllr J Brown	Cllr R Leach
Cllr G Cosnahan	Cllr L Lyons
Cllr K Davis	Cllr C Martin
Cllr S Dorsett	Cllr J Morley
Cllr W Forster	Cllr E Nicholson
Cllr P Graves	Cllr S Oades
Cllr S Greentree	Cllr L Rice
Cllr S Hussain	Cllr D Roberts
Cllr I Johnson	

Absent: Councillors H Akberali, T Aziz, A Caulfield, A Javaid, S Mukherjee, T Spenser and M Sullivan.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Akberali, Councillor Caulfield, Councillor Javaid, Councillor Mukherjee, Councillor Spencer and Councillor Sullivan, and Claire Storey, Independent Co-Opted Member.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Strategic Director - Corporate Resources, Kevin Foster declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The companies were listed in an attached schedule. The interests were such that Mr Foster could advise on those items.

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

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Head of Transformation, Digital and Customer, Adam Walther, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed

director. The companies were listed in an attached schedule. The interests were such that Mr Walther could advise on those items.

3. MINUTES.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meetings of the Council held on 28 September 2023 and 12 October 2023 be approved and signed as true and correct records.

4. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.

The Mayor advised the Council of the recent events and engagements he had attended, including the opening of the refurbished Old Woking Community Centre and the Voluntary Sector Fair held at Woking Leisure Centre. The Remembrance Day Service had been very well attended and more recently the Mayor had attended the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Jubilee Square.

The Mayor took the opportunity to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and New Year.

5. URGENT BUSINESS.

No items of Urgent Business were considered.

6. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF PUBLIC WBC23-046.

A question had been received from a member of public. The question, together with the reply from the Portfolio Holder, was presented as follows.

Question 1 – Wade Pollard

“At the meeting of the Woking Borough Council Executive on 24th March 2022 it was resolved the Old Woking Community Centre project be included in the Investment Programme of which £1.4m to be funded by the Council through S106 developer contributions.

The project has now been completed. I know this because the Council recently put out a statement on social media to announce it. The statement also included the comment that the project had received £1.4m funding from Woking Borough Council (Community Infrastructure Levy grant).

The latest Community Infrastructure (CIL) Funding by available area statement I have seen is dated October 2023. It showed funding available of £163,283.53 for Mount Hermon Ward. I believe Old Woking to be in this Ward. This sum is after deducting only £13,100 for spending and commitments.

The table is for amounts that can be authorised by Ward Councillors, i.e. 15% of the total CIL. Grossing it up to its total of £1.1m is still short of the amount spent. It is not strictly necessary to do that as the 85% does not have come from CIL within the Ward. However

other Ward Councillors would not be happy to have the impact of developments without the corollary CIL spending within their Ward and to have it spent in other Wards.

This means that if the funding provided by the Council came from CIL, none was deducted from that accruing directly to Mount Hermon Ward.

My question;-

Was the Old Woking Community Centre project funded by S106 developer contributions or from a Community Infrastructure Levy grant?"

Reply from Councillor Ann-Marie Barker

"In March 2021 the Executive approved a proposal to develop the Old Woking Community Centre for use by Woking College. The extension of the College was considered a key benefit for the community. The works were to be funded partly by the College and were subject to developers contributions being identified as available to apply to this project.

The scheme was worked up in detail with Woking College and the College identified some additional funds which were allocated to the scheme. Whilst s106 developers contributions specifically to support education provision had been identified, it was not possible to allocate Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to this scheme due to the competing pressures on these funds which support all infrastructure in the Borough. The project budget was therefore amended to a total of £2m (£2.9m previously) funded £600k (£400k previously) by the College and £1.4m by the Council through s106 developers contributions for education. No CIL monies were allocated to the project. The project included in the Council's Investment Programme reflected this amended funding. The project subsequently received additional external funding from the Old Woking Community Association and Surrey County Council's Your Fund Surrey (YFS) which increased the scope of works.

For clarification, the Old Woking Community Centre is in the Hoe Valley Ward."

The Mayor thanked Mr Wade for submitting the question.

[Post Meeting Note: It was clarified following the meeting that the Old Woking Community Association had not provided any funding for the project.]

7. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WBC23-044.

Copies of the question submitted under Standing Order 8.1 together with the draft reply had been published in advance of the meeting. The reply was confirmed by the Portfolio Holder and a supplementary question was asked and reply given as set out below:

Question from Councillor Josh Brown

"Can the Portfolio Holder confirm whether the Council applied to the Phase II of the Swimming Pool Support Fund, and if not, why not?"

Reply from Councillor Ellen Nicholson

“Regrettably, an application could not be made within the time allowed due to a late change to the eligibility criteria. The Council was initially informed that we were not eligible to apply for either Phase 1 (revenue) or Phase 2 (capital) of the Swimming Pool Support Fund due to the Section 114 notice having been laid. I felt that this was unfair and challenged this through the Local Government Association. There was a delay in receiving a response, which eventually confirmed that we would be permitted to submit an application for Phase 2. Unfortunately, this confirmation was only received 2 days before the deadline for Phase 2. This did not allow sufficient time to prepare a detailed application for capital funds that would have needed quotes for works from contractors. However, the Council is now in a better position to apply for future funding through Sport England or similar.”

Supplementary Question

“Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. Why is it that members of the Executive suggested on social media after you were made aware of the, the, the second phase that the Council could have applied for the second phase of the swimming, swimming pool support fund? Why, why is it after the 15th of October, members of the Executive were seen on social media still suggesting that the Council couldn't apply for the swimming pool support fund because of our Section 114 notice.”

Reply from Councillor Ellen Nicholson

“Thank you for your comment there, Councillor Brown. I don't have social media in front of me with the actual timelines. I think it has been incredibly difficult to actually work out what is possible and what's not possible with a Section 114, whether we were able to apply for funding, whether we weren't able to apply for funding, whether we were having help from the Local Government Association and our Commissioners as well. So I think it has been an incredibly muddy process, so whether the timelines on social media and whether the timelines within the answer to the question are accurate, I can't say at this moment in time, but the implication was that we were not able to apply for the funding due to the Section 114 due to the inherited financial situation, and it all comes back to that. Thank you.”

8. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

The Leader of the Council advised that it continued to be a challenging year, with more challenging times ahead. Since the last meeting of Council, the Chief Executive had announced that she would be leaving Woking Borough Council. It was not felt that the time was right to recruit a new permanent Chief Executive. An interim solution was needed and, in view of the Government intervention, an interim Managing Director from the Government pool of experienced Commissioners would be appointed. In the meantime the Council continued to implement the Improvement and Recovery Plan.

In regard to the need to appoint a permanent Director of Finance, the Leader of the Council advised that it was intended to confirm an appointment at Council on 8 February 2024. Eugene Walker, the existing Interim Director of Finance, had offered to support the new appointment through to the summer of 2024.

Reference was made to the recent debate and press coverage of electric vehicle (EV) charging in the Red Car Park. The Leader clarified that the figure discussed, of £148,000,

related to the total spend on electricity for the car park over 18 months; the actual cost of the EV charging was approximately £1,500 each month, in-line with a previous policy of the Council to provide free EV charging. The Council was now in the final stages of commissioning new software which would allow a tariff to be applied to EV charging, and a supplementary report would be considered later in the meeting proposing the introduction of charges.

No announcements were made by the Committee Chairs or the Chief Executive.

9. ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS, DOMESTIC ABUSE AND WHITE RIBBON WBC23-042.

Councillor Nicholson, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, introduced an item highlighting the work of the charity White Ribbon, which sought to prevent violence against women and girls by addressing its root causes and changing long-established and harmful attitudes, systems and behaviours around masculinity that perpetuated inequality and violence.

The Council welcomed the report and reiterated its support for the work of White Ribbon.

RESOLVED

- That (i) Woking Borough Council continues to resolve to raise awareness and understanding of risk posed by Violence Against Women and Girls across the Borough through its internal processes and external communications;
- (ii) Woking Borough Council works with partners and stakeholders in collaboration in achieving the greater awareness of Violence Against Women and Girls; and
- (iii) Woking Borough Council revisits its aim to be White Ribbon accredited annually, and undertakes to initiate this when the financial situation stabilises.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES WBC23-041.

The Council had before it a report on the recommendations from the Executive and the Standards and Audit Committee, setting out the extracts from the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 16 November 2023 and the Standards and Audit Committee held on 23 November 2023. In accordance with the Constitution, the recommendations were deemed to have been moved and seconded.

10A. REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2024-25 EXE23-057

Councillor Roberts, Portfolio Holder for Finance, introduced the report on the annual review of Fees and Charges, setting out the context in which the proposals had been drawn up. As a result of over reliance on income from commercial investments, the Council faced a budget shortfall in the region of £12m. Whilst the Council had identified significant savings, it was clear that it was no longer in a position to fund its discretionary services and faced three options; such services could be placed with an organisation better placed to meet community needs; or, if a priority, the services would have to become self-funding; or the

Council had to withdraw from the service. In future years, the fees and charges would be reviewed in line with a commercial strategy of the Council, work on which had already started.

Councillor Roberts highlighted two points: in respect of the car park charges, a Parking Study was currently taking place and proposals would be put forward for Member consideration in February 2024. Secondly, a supplementary paper had been published earlier in the day, setting out an additional recommendation (v) for the Council to consider in respect of introducing fees for the electric vehicle charging points in Council owned car parks. As an officer report and proposal, it was not necessary for the recommendation to be formally moved and seconded.

The proposals were debated at length by the Council, with concerns raised over the level of increases in the Council's fees and charges. It was argued that not all the proposals were supported by detailed cost breakdowns in each service. Reference was made to the level of inflation and the Council was advised that the charges had to be based on anticipated future rates of inflation, noting that the rate in recent years had been significantly higher than predicted. It was added that, in view of the financial position of the Council, it was essential that the Authority maximised its receipts.

The increases in the charges for the Rhoda McGaw Theatre were highlighted, with concern expressed that local drama groups would no longer be able to afford to use the Theatre. The increase in the charge for green waste collection was also referred to, though it was advised that the new charge would bring the Council in line with that of other Surrey Authorities. Some Members also felt that it had not been possible to fully scrutinise the proposals, with additional details only received earlier in the day.

Councillor Roberts responded to the points raised during the debate, emphasising that it would take time for the Council to achieve its ambitions around the annual review of fees and charges. The concerns and frustrations of Members over the position the Council found itself in were acknowledged.

The Mayor referred Members to the recommendations set out in the supplementary report, together with the additional recommendation (v). In accordance with Standing Order 10.8, recommendations (i) to (v) were put to a vote and the names of Members voting for and against were recorded as follows:

In favour: Councillors A-M Barker, A Boote, G Cosnahan, W Forster, P Graves, S Greentree, S Hussain, I Johnson, D Jordan, A Kirby, R Leach, L Lyons, C Martin, L Morales, J Morley, E Nicholson, L Rice and D Roberts.

Total in favour: 18

Against: Councillors J Brown, K Davis and S Dorsett.

Total against: 3

Present not voting: The Mayor and Councillor S Oades.

Total present not voting: 2

The recommendations were therefore carried by 18 votes in favour and 3 votes against.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the discretionary fees and charges for 2024/25, as set out in Appendices 1 – 4 of the report, be approved;
- (ii) the proposed increases in discretionary fees and charges from 1st January 2024, as set out in Appendices 5 – 7 of the report, be approved;
- (iii) to move the waste service to a cost neutral position as soon as possible, any of the proposed 2024/25 increases for Bulky Waste and Waste Receptacles set out in Appendix 2 to the report that can be implemented quickly should be introduced at the earliest practical date following approval by Council;
- (iv) next year's process will use the Commercial Strategy and Protocol being developed as part of the Improvement and Recovery as the framework for setting fees and charges, to ensure that fairness, equity and social impacts are balanced with a sound commercial approach; and
- (v) delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director – Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Finance, to agree charging fees in respect of electric vehicle chargers in Council owned car parks.

10B. CLIMATE CHANGE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) EXE23-067

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation introduced a report which proposed the adoption of a revised Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD, which had been reviewed through the Greener Woking Working Group, would provide updated guidance on the application of policies within the Core Strategy relating to climate change.

A public consultation on the Climate Change SPD had been completed and the Council had received 17 responses, including from Thames Water, Natural England, WeACT and local Neighbourhood Forums.

The proposals within the SPD were welcomed by the Council, noting that they addressed many of the issues that Climate Change would bring and would include all of the villages in the Borough.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the various representations to the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (ii) the revised Climate Change SPD included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of managing development across the Borough and other planning decisions; and

- (iii) the requirements of the SPD should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 30th November 2023.

10C. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024-25 EXE23-058

The Council was invited to agree the calendar of meetings for the 2024/25 Municipal Year. The Leader of the Council noted that the importance of scrutiny was recognised and that the dates of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been chosen to take place shortly before the meetings of the Executive.

RESOLVED

That the Calendar of Meetings 2024/25 be approved as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

10D. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PLANNING COMMITTEE STA23-024

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Ann-Marie Barker, introduced the recommendations of the Standards and Audit Committee which proposed amendments to the Constitution relating to Public Speaking at Planning Committee. The main changes proposed included the reduction of the threshold for public speaking from ten to five objections and the inclusion of supporters of applications in meeting the threshold. It was noted that the proposals had been considered by the Corporate Governance Working Group, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Planning Committee before being discussed by the Standards and Audit Committee.

The Councillors welcomed the changes to the public speaking process and supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the amended Public Speaking at Planning Committee section of the Constitution (Appendix 2 to the report) be adopted, as amended by the Standards and Audit Committee in relation to paragraph 4.10;
- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.

10E. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION - MEDIA PROTOCOL STA23-025

The Standards and Audit Committee had considered proposals for the adoption, and inclusion in the Constitution, of a Corporate Press and Media Protocol which set out the roles and responsibilities for managing media relations and the reputation of the Council. The Protocol would apply to members of the Executive and Council Officers who may be contacted by representatives of the media.

Councillor Kirby welcomed the Protocol but spoke against Section 8 of the paper which stated that the Government appointed Commissioners would have the opportunity to

review and comment on any press releases and public statements. Councillor Kirby argued that the proposal could in essence gag the Council and advised that he would not support the proposal. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Morales, shared concerns over the reference to the Commissioners and formally moved that Section 8 of the report (Commissioner Team Approvals Process) should be removed from the Protocol. The motion was seconded by Councillor Hussain.

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services advised the Council that the Commissioners had the authority to overrule decisions of the Council and had the right to approve press releases and statements issued by the Council. Removing reference to the Commissioners from within the Protocol would not change this right. It was noted that to-date there had been no disagreements between Members, Officers and Commissioners with respect to press releases or statements issued by the Council. In view of the advice, several Councillors indicated that they would support the adoption of the Protocol as drafted and Councillor Morales withdrew her motion.

In accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the recommendations set out in the report before Council were put to a vote and the names of Members voting for and against were recorded as follows:

In favour:	Councillors A-M Barker, A Boote, J Brown, G Cosnahan, K Davis, S Dorsett, W Forster, P Graves, S Greentree, S Hussain, I Johnson, D Jordan, R Leach, L Lyons, C Martin, J Morley, E Nicholson, S Oades, L Rice and D Roberts.
Total in favour:	20
Against:	Councillor A Kirby.
Total against:	1
Present not voting:	The Mayor and Councillor L Morales.
Total present not voting:	2

The recommendations were therefore carried by 20 votes in favour and 1 vote against.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the Corporate Press and Media Protocol (Appendix 1 to the report) be adopted;
- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.

10F. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION - PROVISIONS FOR URGENT BUSINESS STA23-026.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Ann-Marie Barker, outlined the proposals to adopt a formal procedure to deal with matters of Urgent Business, and the recommendations of the

Standards and Audit Committee. If agreed by the Council, the procedure would be added to the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the section on Urgent Business (Appendix 1 to the report) be added to the Council's Constitution under Section 1 of Part 4;
- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.

10F. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION - QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF PUBLIC STA23-027.

The Council considered the recommendations of the Standards and Audit Committee which proposed amendments to the existing arrangements for receiving questions from members of the public at Council meetings, which had been introduced earlier in the year. The recommendations included the suggestion that each questioner would be offered the opportunity to ask one supplementary question at the meeting.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the existing section on Questions from Members of the Public (Appendix 1 to the report) in the Council's Constitution be updated under Section 1 of Part 4;
- (ii) the addition of any references within the new section to other sections within the Constitution be delegated to the Monitoring Officer as minor amendments; and
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.

11. IMPROVEMENT AND RECOVERY PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE WBC23-043.

The Council had before it an update report on the Improvement and Recovery Plan, adopted following the statutory government intervention and the issuing of a Section 114 Notice. The Plan would ensure that the expectations detailed in the Secretary of State's Directions published on 25 May 2023 would be delivered and would help the Council return to meeting its best value duty. The Plan would also draw upon the recommendations of the non-statutory external assurance review into the Council's finances, investments and related governance.

The Leader of the Council explained that the three-to-five-year plan, adopted in August 2023, detailed the actions that the Council would undertake to deliver against the Government directions, together with milestones and delivery targets to measure progress. The Council was required to report to the Commissioners on the delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan after three months, six months and thereafter at six-monthly intervals, or at such intervals as the Commissioners directed. The first three-

month progress report had been submitted to Commissioners in August; the report now before the Council outlined the progress after six months. The report also included the Chief Executive’s position statement in relation to the Plan.

The Leader of the Council responded to points raised during the discussion before the Mayor referred the Councillors to the recommendation set out in the report.

RESOLVED

That the six months’ progress since the beginning of the Government intervention on 25 May 2023 be approved.

12. POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW WBC23-045.

The report before the Council outlined the outcomes of a review of the existing arrangements for the Borough’s polling districts and polling places. The review was a requirement placed on all local Authorities responsible for elections and had to be completed by no later than 31 January 2025.

A consultation exercise had been undertaken on the Council’s proposals. The Leader of the Council explained that no changes had been proposed for the majority of the existing arrangements. The review had therefore focussed on those polling districts where changes were proposed, namely in the St John’s West polling district and the Barnsbury Polling District.

In respect of the Barnsbury Polling District, the Leader advised that Members were keen to retain the use of The Lighthouse as a polling station which, due to the lack of a suitably accessible entrance, could not currently be considered as a suitable venue. Members were therefore keen to ensure that further investigations were undertaken to explore options to address the accessibility issues of The Lighthouse. In view of this, the Leader moved and Councillor Forster seconded an amended recommendation, changing recommendation (ii) from “the Woking Sportsbox be designated as the polling place for the Barnsbury polling district (D5) in the Heathlands Ward;” to “the polling place for the Barnsbury polling district (D5) in the Heathlands Ward not be determined until further investigation is undertaken with respect to necessary accessibility requirements;”.

RESOLVED

That (i) the existing arrangements for the following polling districts and their designated polling places be continued:

A1 - West Byfleet	E3 - Shackleford Road
A2 - Byfleet	E4 - Old Woking
B1 - Town Centre	E5 - Gresham Park
B2 - Town Centre North	F1 - Horsell West
B3 - Walton Road	F2 - Horsell South
B4 - Sheerwater	F3 - Horsell East
B5 - Board School Road	G1 - Knaphill West
B6 - Woodham	G2 - Knaphill South
C1 - Goldsworth West	G3 - Knaphill East
C2 - Goldsworth Central	G4 - Knaphill North
C3 - Goldsworth East	H1 - Mount Hermon West
C4 - Goldsworth South	H2 - Mount Hermon West

D1 - Brookwood	H3 - Mount Hermon Central A
D2 - Brookwood South	H4 - Mount Hermon Central B
D3 - Mayford	J1 - Maybury
D4 - Hook Heath	J2 - Maybury South
D6 - Sutton Green	J3 - Pyrford
E1 - Westfield	J4 - Pyrford North
E2 - Kingfield	K3 - St John's East

- (ii) the polling place for the Barnsbury polling district (D5) in the Heathlands Ward not be determined until further investigation is undertaken with respect to necessary accessibility requirements;
- (iii) changes to the St John's West polling district (K1) boundary to include all properties within St John's Lye (Festival Path) and Carolyn Close from the St John's Central polling district (K2);
- (iv) the St John's Memorial Hall be designated as the polling place for the St John's West polling district (K1) in the St John's Ward;
- (v) changes to the St John's Central polling district (K2) boundary to remove all properties within St John's Lye (Festival Path) and Carolyn Close to the St John's West polling district (K1);
- (vi) the St John's Church be designated as the polling place for the St John's Central polling district (K2) in the St John's Ward: and
- (vii) the Council's appreciation be expressed to the residents of Sutton Avenue for their support and assistance in the use of the Common Room for the May 2023 Poll.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION.

Councillor Hassan Akberali

The following motion was moved by Councillor Graves and seconded by Councillor Boote.

13A. NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR HASSAN AKBERALI - SINGLE USE VAPES.

"This motion proposes that Woking Borough Council resolves that the Leader of the Council writes to:-

1. Jonathan Lord MP, requesting him:
 - a. To make urgent representations asking for banning single-use vapes on behalf of Woking schools, parents, and residents.
 - b. To expedite the conclusion and actions of the public consultation, bearing in mind the consequences of the EU proposing a ban in 2026 and France rolling out a ban in December 2023 and the risk as those markets close, disposable vapes will flood into the UK.

- c. Provide schools funding to install detection devices to improve the discovery of illegal substances instead of schools having to fund out of their hard-pressed budgets.
 - d. Prohibit possession of vapes on school premises with appropriate violation measures.
2. Surrey Trading Standards to request they:
- a. Carry out regular test purchases, seize products, and issue fixed penalty notices when a business breaches the law.
 - b. Address the shortage of qualified trading standard officers required to prosecute those retailers selling to underage customers.
 - c. Implement mandatory age-of-sale signage on vaping products.
 - d. Implement sanctions for breaching these rules, the same as penalties handed out under tobacco display regulations.
 - e. Publish how many test purchases have been conducted by trading standards followed by successful prosecutions.
 - f. The other area that needs tackling is internet sales of illegal vapes and those containing THC and Spice, which will need coordinated action between the police and trading standards.”

In the absence of Councillor Akberali, the Notice of Motion was introduced by Councillor Graves who advised the Council of the environmental impact of single-use vapes being discarded. The purpose of the Motion was two-fold; to encourage the Borough’s MP to make representations seeking an end to single-use vapes and to seek action by Trading Standards to enforce the laws around vaping. It was noted that a public consultation was currently being undertaken by the Government on creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping and Councillor Graves urged Councillors to complete the consultation before it ended on 6 December 2023.

Several Councillors expressed their support for the Motion, noting the impact of vaping on young people and schools and drawing attention to the efforts of manufacturers to target young people. Reference was also made to the damaging effect of the batteries in single-use vapes, which could lead to fires and contamination of the environment and were toxic if ingested. However, the point was made by Councillor Davis that, whilst he was sympathetic to the objectives, the Council should not spend time on Motions which had nothing to do with Woking. Concerns were also raised over the wording of the Motion and what the Council could achieve through the Motion.

Councillor Graves responded to the points raised during the debate, recognising the strong feelings the topic had evoked amongst Councillors. At the request of Councillor Davis, a named vote was held and, in accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the Motion were recorded as follows:

In favour: Councillors A-M Barker, A Boote, G Cosnahan, W Forster, P Graves, S Greentree, S Hussain, I Johnson, D Jordan, A Kirby, R Leach, L Lyons, C Martin, L Morales, J Morley, E Nicholson, S Oades, L Rice and D Roberts.

Total in favour: 19*
Against: Councillors K Davis and S Dorsett.
Total against: 2
Present not voting: The Mayor and Councillor J Brown.
Total present not voting: 2

The recommendations were therefore carried by 19 votes in favour and 2 votes against.

RESOLVED

That the Motion be supported.

*[*NOTE: Following the meeting, the number of those announced as having voted in favour of the Motion was reviewed and revised from 18 to 19.]*

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 10.19 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____