

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WOKING

held on 17 October 2019

Present:

Cllr Mrs B A Hunwicks (Mayor)
Cllr S Hussain (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr M Ali	Cllr D Harlow
Cllr S Ashall	Cllr K Howard
Cllr A Azad	Cllr D E Hughes
Cllr T Aziz	Cllr I Johnson
Cllr A-M Barker	Cllr C S Kemp
Cllr D J Bittleston	Cllr R N Leach
Cllr J E Bond	Cllr L S Lyons
Cllr G G Chrystie	Cllr N Martin
Cllr G S Cundy	Cllr L M N Morales
Cllr K M Davis	Cllr C Rana
Cllr G W Elson	Cllr J R Sanderson
Cllr W P Forster	Cllr M A Whitehand

Absent: Councillors A J Boote, M A Bridgeman, R Mohammed and Cllr M I Raja.

1. MINUTES.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 25 July and 12 September 2019 be approved and signed as true and correct records.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor A Boote, Councillor M Bridgeman, Councillor R Mohammed and Councillor M I Raja, and Peter Bryant, Head of Democratic and Legal Services.

3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.

The Mayor spoke of the many projects and events that had recently taken place across Woking to give a flavour of the variety of activities in the Borough. These ranged from local company Samco receiving the Queen's Award for Industry, the opening of a new coffee shop – Black & White – in the town centre and the topping out ceremony of the Victoria Square development, to the Chinese Association's Autumn Festival, the award of language certificates to Syrian refugees and the extensive 'green' agenda that could be seen across Woking.

4. PRESENTATION BY THE BROOKWOOD CLUB.

The Mayor welcomed to the meeting Caroline Halls, Liam Brennan and Mandi Parish, representatives for the Brookwood Club. The Club had recently marked the Centenary of a Peace Dinner held by the Club in 1919 to celebrate the end of the Great War and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles by holding a Peace Afternoon Tea. The Mayor was presented with a framed photographic record of both the 1919 Peace Dinner and the recent Peace Afternoon Tea.

5. URGENT BUSINESS.

No items of Urgent Business were considered.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the Leader of the Council, Councillor D J Bittleston, Councillor A Azad, Councillor D Harlow and Councillor C S Kemp declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items under which the Thamesway Group of Companies was discussed, arising from their positions as Directors of the Thamesway Group of Companies. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D J Bittleston declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items under which the Victoria Square Development was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Victoria Square Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D J Bittleston declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items under which Rutland Woking Limited was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Rutland Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor G S Cundy declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items under which the Brookwood Cemetery was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited, Brookwood Park Limited and Brookwood Cemetery Limited. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor I Johnson declared an interest in minute items 7 – Petition – Woking Football Club Development, 9 – Questions, 10e – Notice of Motion – Councillor A-M Barker – Review of Kingfield Development Stadium Capacities, and Questions to be considered under Part II of the agenda. The interest arose from his wife's position as Chairman of Woking Football Club and was such that Councillor Johnson left the Chamber during the determination of the items.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, and the Director of Housing, Louise Strongitharm, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items under which the Thamesway Group of Companies was discussed, arising from their positions as Directors of the Thamesway Group of Companies. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items under which the Victoria Square Development was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Victoria Square Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, and the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items under which Export House was discussed, arising from their positions as Directors of Export House Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items under which Brookwood Cemetery was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited, Brookwood Park Limited and Brookwood Cemetery Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Finance Director, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items under which Dukes Court was discussed, arising from her position as a Director of Dukes Court Owner T S a r l. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, Leigh Clarke (Finance Director) declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in Agenda Item 7 – Petition – Woking Football Club Development – arising from (i) her husband having a small shareholding in Woking Football Club and (ii) a Council appointed director of Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited. The interest was such that it did not prevent Mrs Clarke from advising Council on this matter.

7. PETITION - WOKING FOOTBALL CLUB DEVELOPMENT. WBC19-026

The Council had before it a report on a petition expressing opposition to the expansion of Woking Football Club and the development of associated residential accommodation. The Mayor welcomed Katie Bowes to the meeting who was given the opportunity to present the petition on behalf of those who had supported it. Following the presentation, the Councillors were given an opportunity to ask questions of the Petitioner for clarification before the matter was debated. The petitioner was accompanied by Monique Van-Bellen and Andy Caulfield who assisted with the questions.

The Petitioner outlined in detail the concerns of residents over the proposals, highlighting the level of inappropriate residential development proposed and concerns over the long term viability of a 10,000 seater stadium. It was acknowledged that the Football Club was in need of investment but that this needed to be at an appropriate level and undertaken through a phased approach.

Following the opportunity to ask questions of the petitioner, the Council moved to the debate. Councillor Forster moved and Councillor Hughes seconded the following recommendation:

“This Council requests that GolDev, Woking Football Club and other stakeholders reassess their plans to redevelop the Laithwaite Community Stadium and surrounding area in light of the petition and concerns of local people.”

The Councillors welcomed the recommendation and reiterated the overall objective of ensuring the Football Club had a sustainable future, to be achieved through a manageable approach.

RESOLVED

That this Council requests that GolDev, Woking Football Club and other stakeholders reassess their plans to redevelop the Laithwaite Community Stadium and surrounding area in light of the petition and concerns of local people.

The Mayor thanked the Petitioner and those supporting the petition for attending the meeting.

Adjournment

Following the determination of the Petition, the Mayor adjourned the meeting for five minutes to enable the petitioners to leave the meeting.

8. PETITION - ACCESSIBLE TAXI VEHICLES. WBC19-032

The Council had received a petition which sought a change to the Council's policy of requiring all taxis to be wheelchair accessible. The proposal would remove the requirement, enabling the taxi drivers to operate in both saloon and DDA compliant vehicles. Mr Burhan Khan presented the petition on behalf of those who had signed it, supported by Zafar Iqbal and Ifran Khan. Following the presentation, Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Petitioner.

The report set out the background to the Council's policy which was adopted in November 2007 and required all Hackney Carriages to be wheelchair accessible by the end of March 2020. Drivers had been working towards compliance with the policy for many years and numerous drivers had purchased accessible vehicles. In response to a question, the Council was advised that the Policy had been adopted following a full public consultation which had supported the new policy.

The Petitioner advised that a mixed fleet would benefit all customers, advising that they had received representations from many individuals, including those with disabilities, that the DDA vehicles were inappropriate for their needs and expressing their preference for saloon cars.

On moving to the debate, the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Harlow, moved and Councillor Rana seconded a recommendation to defer the implementation of the Policy to December 2020 to allow the Council an opportunity to review the policy taking into account all the different elements involved. The outcome of the review would be brought back to the Council by October 2020, with Officers advising that it would be unreasonable to complete such a review in any less time.

Councillor Ali moved and Councillor Aziz seconded an alternative recommendation to agree in principle that a mixed fleet was retained, with the details to be drawn up by the Licensing Committee. The Council was advised that the proposed recommendation would be considered in the event the recommendation before the Council, as moved by Councillor Harlow, was not supported.

In accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the recommendation were recorded.

In favour: Councillors S Ashall, A Azad, A-M Barker, D Bittleston, G Cundy, K Davis, G Elson, W Forster, D Harlow, K Howard, S Hussain, I Johnson, C Kemp, R Leach, N Martin, L Morales, C Rana, J Sanderson and M Whitehand.

Total in favour: 19

Against: Councillors M Ali and T Aziz.

Total against: 2

Present not voting: Councillors J Bond, G Chrystie, D Hughes and L Lyons,

Total present not voting: 4

The recommendation was therefore carried by 19 votes in favour to 2 votes against.

RESOLVED

That Council defers the implementation of the Taxi Licensing Policy from the end of March 2020 to the end of December 2020 to enable a review of the existing policy to be undertaken.

The Mayor thanked the Petitioner and those supporting the petition for attending the meeting.

9. QUESTIONS.

Copies of questions submitted under Standing Order 8.1 together with draft replies were laid upon the table. In view of the number of questions received and the volume of business before the Council, the Mayor advised that she did not intend to increase the time for questions beyond the fifteen minutes prescribed in the Constitution.

It was noted that several questions dealt with information that was deemed confidential; subject to compliance with the fifteen minutes limit, these questions would be dealt with under Part II of the agenda, press and public excluded.

The replies were confirmed by Members of the Executive, supplementary questions were asked and replies given.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE. WBC19-028

Councillor D J Bittleston moved and Councillor A Azad seconded the reception and adoption of the report and recommendations from the meeting of the Executive held on 10 October 2019.

NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR I JOHNSON - HEATHROW RAIL LINK EXE19-048

The Council received the recommendation of the Executive in respect of a Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Johnson as follows:

“That this Council:

- 1) Notes the UK Government’s invitation in May 2019 for market-led proposals for a new rail link connecting Heathrow Airport from the south and Waterloo and Surrey/Hampshire and this Council’s long-term aspiration for a direct rail link to Heathrow Airport;
- 2) supports action to benefit the environment by minimising traffic and pollution by transferring journeys from road to rail;
- 3) welcomes the initiative of Heathrow Southern Railway to propose a project involving a direct rail link from Woking to Heathrow Airport including significant sections via tunnels to minimise environmental impact; and
- 4) asks the Council to write to the Member of Parliament for Woking to press the Secretary of State for Transport to expedite the process of approving a project and selecting a preferred developer, and to advise members when this has been done.”

The Executive had been supportive of the Motion with the exception of point 3) above, noting that it would be considered premature for the Council to declare support for a particular bidder until it had the opportunity to study the bid(s) in detail.

RESOLVED

That the Motion, as amended by the Executive, be supported as set out below:

“That this Council:

- 1) Notes the UK Government’s invitation in May 2019 for market-led proposals for a new rail link connecting Heathrow Airport from the south and Waterloo and Surrey/Hampshire and this Council’s long-term aspiration for a direct rail link to Heathrow Airport;
- 2) supports action to benefit the environment by minimising traffic and pollution by transferring journeys from road to rail;
- 3) asks the Council to write to the Member of Parliament for Woking to press the Secretary of State for Transport to expedite the process of approving a project and selecting a preferred developer, and to advise members when this has been done.”

NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR G CUNDY - INTRODUCE A PLANNING POLICY TO GREEN NEW DEVELOPMENT OVER 15 STOREYS EXE19-049

A Notice of Motion calling for a planning policy to green new developments over 15 storeys had been received from Councillor Cundy as follows:

“This Council should introduce a policy at the earliest opportunity whereby any new planning application for development over 15 storeys should have at least 20% of its total surface area as living wall, garden terrace or roof garden. Where the Council has ownership, control or interest this policy should be adopted prior to formal policy introduction as a matter of internal policy.”

The Council had before it the recommendation from the Executive, which had proposed that the motion should be deferred and considered as part of the future review of the Core Strategy. The proposal by the Executive was welcomed by Councillor Cundy.

RESOLVED

That the Motion be deferred and considered as part of the future review of the Core Strategy.

NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR A-M BARKER - FIERY BIRD VENUE/PHOENIX CULTURAL CENTRE EXE19-050

Councillor Barker had submitted the following notice of motion:

“This Council supports the work of the Fiery Bird Venue/Phoenix Cultural Centre CIC and calls for a permanent space to be found for this project in Woking Town Centre.”

The recommendation of the Executive was introduced by the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Kemp who explained that the Executive had confirmed that it would do all it could to support Fiery Bird in moving to a permanent location. Councillor Barker spoke in support of the motion and welcomed the recommendation of the Executive.

RESOLVED

That the Motion be supported and the Council notes that action was already in hand.

NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR M ALI - CHAIRMANSHIP OF OVERSIGHT PANELS EXE19-051

The following Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Ali:

“The democratic system works best with checks and balances and distributed decision making as opposed to centralized and single source authority. As such it’s important that the chairs of the over sight panels including but not limited to Victoria Square and Sheerwater are elected by the councillors who are the members of the respective panel and shall as a recommendation not be the relevant portfolio holders. This serves democratic practices best.

Following the approval of this motion immediate election for the chairs of the oversight panels shall be held for the current year (irrespective of any past decisions) and there after every year follow the same pattern as the rest of the committees of the council for election of the chair.

This shall apply to existing and future panels.

In view of the recent meeting of Victoria Square, I request that this motion be determined by the full council now and not referred to the executive.”

Councillor Ali asked for the motion to be debated as originally moved and the recommendation by the Executive therefore fell. Councillor Ali spoke in support of the motion before the matter was debated by the Council.

In accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the recommendation were recorded.

In favour: Councillors M Ali, T Aziz, A-M Barker, J Bond, G Chrystie, W Forster, D Hughes, R Leach, L Lyons, L Morales and J Sanderson.

Total in favour: 11

Against: Councillors S Ashall, A Azad, D Bittleston, G Cundy, K Davis, G Elson, D Harlow, K Howard, S Hussain, I Johnson, C Kemp, N Martin, C Rana and M Whitehand.

Total against: 14

Present not voting: None

The motion was therefore lost by 11 votes in favour to 14 votes against.

RESOLVED

That the Motion be not supported.

Adjournment

Following the determination of the Notice of Motion, the Mayor adjourned the meeting for a ten minute comfort break.

It was formally recorded that Councillor Johnson had earlier advised the Mayor that he would not be returning to the meeting following the Adjournment. Councillor Bond and Councillor Chrystie did not return following the Adjournment and had not given the Mayor prior notice of their intentions.

NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR A-M BARKER - REVIEW OF KINGFIELD DEVELOPMENT STADIUM CAPACITIES EXE19-052

The Executive has been asked to consider the following Notice of Motion received from Councillor Barker:

“Council notes that a capacity of 5000 is sufficient for a football team to compete in League Two. Council calls on officers to assess the effect on current proposals for development at Kingfield of stadium capacities at various levels between 6000 and 8000.”

The Executive had supported the motion at its meeting, noting that options for the ground to be smaller would be available to the Council when it was asked to make a decision. Councillor Barker spoke in support of the motion before the matter was debated. Councillor Lyons expressed concern over the specific nature of the motion and it was therefore agreed that, in accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the recommendation of the Executive to support the motion were recorded.

In favour:	Councillors S Ashall, A Azad, A-M Barker, D Bittleston, G Cundy, K Davis, G Elson, W Forster, D Harlow, K Howard, D Hughes, S Hussain, C Kemp, R Leach, N Martin, L Morales, C Rana, J Sanderson and M Whitehand.
Total in favour:	19
Against:	Councillors M Ali, T Aziz and L Lyons
Total against:	3
Present not voting:	None.

The recommendation was therefore carried by 19 votes in favour to 2 votes against.

RESOLVED

That the Motion be supported.

RECOMMENDATION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP - CLIMATE EMERGENCY EXE19-112

The Council had before it the recommendations from the Executive in respect of proposals raised by the Climate Change Working Group which were essential to monitoring progress in achieving the target of the Council's estate and operations becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and Borough-wide by 2050. The recommendations were introduced by Councillor Davies, Portfolio Holder for the environment and sustainability.

Councillor Lyons spoke against recommendation (v) which had the effect of requesting the Planning Committee to exercise its discretion wherever possible to permit zero or minimal parking provision in Woking Town Centre developments in accordance with the Council's Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document. Councillor Morales moved and Councillor Aziz seconded an amendment to recommendation (iv) to delete the words "in the longer term". A further motion – seeking the addition of the provision of electric vehicles under recommendation (v) – was withdrawn following advice that the electric vehicles were not covered in the Supplementary Planning Document.

In accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the amendment were recorded.

In favour:	Councillors M Ali, T Aziz, A-M Barker, W Forster, D Hughes, L Lyons L Morales, J Sanderson.
Total in favour:	8
Against:	Councillors S Ashall, A Azad, D Bittleston, G Cundy, K Davis, G Elson, D Harlow, K Howard, S Hussain, C Kemp, N Martin, C Rana and M Whitehand.
Total against:	13
Present not voting:	R Leach
Total present not voting:	1

The amendment was therefore lost by 8 votes in favour to 13 votes against.

The Mayor referred the Council to recommendations (i) to (iv) as set out in the report. The recommendations were agreed nem con.

RESOLVED

That (i) the Climate Change Working Group's recommended public definition of carbon neutrality, set out below, be adopted and published on the Council's website:

"On 25 July 2019, the Council pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030. It will reduce to zero any greenhouse emissions associated with its own estate and operations. Where any remaining emissions cannot be avoided, the Council will offset these through projects such as tree planting and maintain trade in renewable energy, thereby eliminating its contribution to climate change";

- (ii) the Climate Change Working Group's recommended definition of the Council's estate and operations - comprising all Council owned assets (as set out in paragraph 3.8 of the Climate Change Working Group Report at Appendix 1) - be adopted;
- (iii) the Climate Change Working Group's recommended baseline year of 2018/19 for monitoring emissions be adopted;
- (iv) in the longer term, the Council will develop plans for borough-wide emissions and adaptation actions to address the climate and ecological emergency, in so far as it is able to influence activities beyond its direct control, with the aim of carbon neutrality by 2050; and

The Mayor referred to recommendation (v) and in accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the recommendation were recorded.

In favour: Councillors S Ashall, A Azad, D Bittleston, G Cundy, K Davis, G Elson, D Harlow, K Howard, S Hussain, C Kemp, R Leach, N Martin, C Rana and M Whitehand.

Total in favour: 14

Against: Councillors M Ali, T Aziz, W Forster, D Hughes and L Lyons

Total against: 5

Present not voting: Councillors A-M Barker, L Morales and J Sanderson.

Total present not voting: 3

The recommendation was therefore carried by 14 votes in favour to 5 votes against.

RESOLVED

That (v) the Planning Committee, having regard to the Parking Standards Supplementary Document, be requested to exercise its discretion wherever possible to permit zero or minimal parking provision in Woking Town Centre developments.

11. POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW. WBC19-030

The Council had before it a supplementary report setting out two proposals; the creation of two new polling districts in the Mount Hermon Ward and the expansion of the Brockhill polling district. The report was presented by Councillor Bittleston and welcomed by the ward councillors.

RESOLVED

- That (i) two new polling districts 'H3 – Mount Hermon Central A' and 'H4, Mount Hermon Central B' be created, containing the streets set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report;
- (ii) the designated polling place for the Mount Hermon Central A and Mount Hermon Central B polling districts be the United Reformed Church, White Rose Lane, Woking; and
- (iii) the C4 – Brockhill polling district be renamed 'Goldsworth Central' and be expanded to contain the streets set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

12. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES. WBC19-027

The Council was invited to nominate two Members to positions on outside bodies appointed to by the Surrey Leaders' Group, which would consider all nominations at its meeting in November 2019. The two positions available were on the South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association and the Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board.

No nominations were received.

13. NOTICES OF MOTION.

No notices of motion had been received.

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC.

The Mayor moved and Councillor Hussain seconded that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items.

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Questions deferred for consideration under Part II and Agenda Item 15 in view of the nature of the proceedings that, if members of

the press and public were present during these items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, to the Local Government Act 1972.

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

15. QUESTIONS.

The Mayor noted that, as the 15 minutes time limit allowed for questions had expired, the Part II questions received from Members would not be dealt with. Details of the questions and the responses given were tabled at the meeting.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE. WBC19-029

LAND MANAGEMENT EXE19-115

The Council had before it the recommendations of the Executive in respect of a land management proposal.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations of the Executive, as set out in the Part II minutes, be agreed.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 11.50 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____