

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11th July 2017 at Pippbrook, Dorking from 7.10pm to 9.45pm

Present: Councillors Simon Ling (Chairman), Raj Haque (Vice Chairman), Tim Ashton, Lucy Botting, Lynne Brooks, John Chandler, Margaret Cooksey, Stephen Cooksey, Mary Cooper, Joe Crome, Rosemary Dickson, David Draper, Simon Edge, Paul Elderton, James Friend, David Harper, Mary Huggins, Chris Hunt, Metin Huseyin, Duncan Irvine, Bridget Kendrick, Paul Kennedy, Tim Loretto, Claire Malcomson, Vivienne Michael, David Mir, Wayne Monkman, John Muggeridge, Paul Newman, Corinna Osborne-Patterson, Jatin Patel, Paul Potter, Sarah Seed, Peter Stanyard, Clayton Wellman and Charles Yarwood.

14. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Hawksworth, Howard Jones, Malcolm Ladell, Michelle Watson and Patricia Wiltshire.

16. Disclosure of Interests

Councillor Lucy Botting declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 as a member of the Bookham Residents Association.

Councillor John Chandler declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 as a member of the Bookham Residents Association and a Trustee of the South Bookham SPACE.

Councillor Simon Edge declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 as the Council appointed representative on the Board of Directors of the Bookham Residents Association.

Councillor Metin Huseyin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 as a member of the Bookham Residents Association.

Councillor Paul Kennedy declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 as a member of a number of community groups in Bookham.

Councillor Paul Newman declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 as a business owner in Bookham.

Councillor Jatin Patel declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 as a member of the Bookham Residents Association.

Councillor Peter Stanyard declared a non-pecuniary interest in Items 7 and 16 as he had previously been employed by companies specialising in supplying roofing and cladding materials and had also acted as a consultant in the same field.

17. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that since his appointment at the Annual Council meeting on 23rd May 2017 he had attended 21 engagements, including town twinning events in France and Germany and five Civic Services. In addition to this the Vice Chairman had also attended nine separate events.

A number of diary dates were confirmed including the date for the Chairman's Civic Reception which would be held on 26th August at the City of London Freemans School. A Christmas Concert would be held on 7th December at the Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall, a Charity Dinner would be held on 18th January 2018 at the Fetcham Tandoori and a Charity Quiz would be held at St Johns School in Leatherhead on 10th February 2018.

18. Appointment of Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service and Electoral Registration Officer/Returning Officer

The Council considered the report set out at pages 7 to 10 of the agenda in respect of the appointment of a new Chief Executive for Mole Valley District Council. The Leader of the Council introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

During the introduction it was advised that the Council was being asked to endorse the appointment of Karen Brimacombe as the new Chief Executive for Mole Valley District Council. A politically balanced Panel of Members had been selected to lead the recruitment process with assistance provided by an external recruitment agency and MVDC's HR team. The Panel had met on three occasions during the rigorous recruitment process which included interviews by both the Panel and a Panel made up of representatives from partner agencies.

The Leader of the Council also highlighted to Members that Karen Brimacombe had over 25 years' experience working within local government and that the Council had received three excellent references. Following the endorsement of the appointment by Council, it was envisioned that the new Chief Executive would start her role in the autumn.

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Karen Brimacombe as Chief Executive/Head of the Paid Service and Electoral Registration Officer/Returning Officer with effect from a date to be agreed with the outgoing employer, be endorsed.

(NB: Counted Vote – 34 in favour, 0 against & 1 abstention)

19. Community Governance Review - Bookham

The Council considered the report set out at pages 11 to 18 of the agenda in respect of the Community Governance Review for Bookham. The Leader of the Council introduced the report and proposed the recommendation. During the introduction it was highlighted that the Local Advisory Poll, which gave electors in the Bookham North and South Wards the opportunity to indicate whether they were in favour of a Parish Council or not, had been conclusive with 83% voting against establishing a Parish Council for Bookham.

During the Community Governance Review process, a petition against the proposition of a Parish Council for Bookham which had 1,692 signatures was submitted to the Council. In line with the Council's Petition Scheme, a representative from the petitioners, the Bookham Residents Association, addressed the meeting on the subject of the petition highlighting the numerous community groups already in existence in Bookham who ran community facilities and organized local events and fundraising. As such it was their view that Bookham was already well represented and a Parish Council was not required.

RESOLVED: That a Parish Council not be established for Bookham.

(NB: Counted Vote – 34 in favour, 0 against & 1 abstention)

20. The Swan Centre – Development and Asset Management Initiatives

The Council considered the recommendation made by the Executive at its meeting on 27th June 2017, which requested the addition of £1.215m to the Capital Programme for 2017/18 to fund improvements to the Swan Centre.

The Executive Member for Economic Development and Transform Leatherhead introduced the report and proposed the recommendation. During the introduction Members were advised that the Executive had agreed the allocation of £190,000 from the Transform Leatherhead Reserve to fund the production of a Development Strategy and Viability Strategy for the Swan Centre.

As well as undertaking the Viability Strategy, a number of short term improvements had also been identified and the Executive was recommending to the Council the addition of £1.215m to the Capital Programme 2017/18 for these works. The improvements had been identified on the basis that they

would be unlikely to be compromised by any long term development of the Centre and would also include a Fire Safety Audit.

Initial works had already commenced to renew the lifts, improve the mall lighting, and introduce measures to deter pigeons, alongside a programme of essential maintenance including improved cleaning of the car park. The additional funding requested would be used to carry out further improvements including the relocation of the toilets, remodelling some parts of the interior of the centre and providing up to four additional retail units. These works would cost approximately £885,000 and could potentially provide an additional income of £69,000 per year, which equated to a return of 7.8%. Through the creation of new units, MVDC would have the opportunity to add to the existing mix of retailers in the Centre, which was currently fully occupied.

It was advised that the improvements to the car park would include

- Making the ramps easier to navigate by cutting back and chamfering/angling kerbs around the ramps, and painting them a bright colour
- Lining walls and columns with rubber at bumper height
- Creating wider bays
- Improving signage, lighting, and decoration.
- A new payment system to allow pay on exit without a barrier using 'check-in, check-out technology' – currently being used at the Royal Surrey Hospital.
- Re-allocation of the disabled spaces to create clusters around the lift cores on all level, but retaining the Shop Mobility spaces on Level 2.

In carrying out these improvements, it was hoped that it would enable the car park to achieve the national 'Park Mark' quality accreditation. The proposed enhancements would cost approximately £330,000 and provide an estimated financial return of £40,000 per year, which equated to a return of 12.1%

The car park would continue to remain allocated for short-term parking with a maximum stay of 4 hours, as its principal objective was to serve as parking for shoppers. However, as the top levels were under-utilised and there was un-met demand within the town for long-term parking, Officers were in discussions with tenants to permit some long-term parking bays on the top level. Any changes to the parking provision would also be informed by surveys conducted to understand demand at busy periods and would be after the completion of the improvement works.

During the discussion of the item, it was questioned whether the returns stated in the report took into account the cost of capital. It was confirmed that they did not, but that this would equate to approximately 4.5% of the total fee, which would still deliver a significant return on the investment.

It was also confirmed that any work at the Centre would be carefully project managed to ensure that disruption to users was minimised and communicated as appropriate. This was considered to be especially important for the proposed work to replace the lifts at the Centre and should there be any need to restrict access to the car park. It was also highlighted that the appointment of any contractors to carry out the work needed to be carefully considered and include confirmation on the materials being used to prevent any future issues.

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the addition of a £1.215 scheme to the capital programme for some short-term asset management initiatives to improve the Swan Centre.

21. Appointments To Committees

The Council was asked to approve a change to the Liberal Democrat group membership of the Development Control Committee.

RESOLVED:

That:

- a) Councillor Tim Loretto replace Councillor Stephen Cooksey as a full member of the Development Control Committee.
- b) Councillor Stephen Cooksey replace Councillor Tim Loretto as a substitute member of the Development Control Committee.

22. Leader's Statement

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vivienne Michael made the following statement:

'In the short time since I last addressed Council, there have been several important events which have significant consequences for our communities. The horrific Grenfell Tower fire has affected us all and it has raised many questions for local government, national government, regulators, landlords and others across the country.

There are two tower blocks in Mole Valley, Linden Lea and Wenlock Edge, both on the Goodwyns Estate. They are owned by Circle Housing and, since the fire, we have been in close contact with Circle seeking reassurance on a number of points relating to fire safety.

The blocks are not clad in the same material as Grenfell Tower but additional safety checks have been undertaken and residents have received advice and support, including the offer of smoke detectors for those flats without a working alarm. A range of other measures have been taken to address fire safety issues across Circle's estate, including the setting up of a dedicated central Fire Safety Team and we understand that review and monitoring will continue.

The Government took a number of actions in the immediate aftermath of the fire and I understand that they will be issuing further advice shortly to assist landlords in decisions on the cladding, insulation and other components of typical wall construction.

The factors that contributed to this tragic event are clearly many and complex and they will take time to unfold. I want to assure Members that we will continue to monitor the information coming from Government, Circle and others so that you continue to be kept up to date and can, in turn, inform and reassure residents.

The Mole Valley Local Plan will shape our District for the next 15 years and all members will be aware that the first public consultation on the Plan, Future Mole Valley, was launched on the 1st July. This won't be the only opportunity that the public will have to feed into the Local Plan process but it is an important one because it will inform our thinking as we move into the next phase of the process, drafting the Plan's detailed proposals and policies. I was struck by the open and constructive way in which Members engaged in the recent Workshop on the issues and options we face and I sincerely hope that all Members will take the opportunity to alert residents to the consultation, encourage them to respond and, above all, listen to what they have to say.

I firmly believe that the Local Plan process is one we need to approach in a spirit of collaboration - I can't believe that there's a Member in this Chamber who doesn't want to preserve the unique environment and quality of life we enjoy here in Mole Valley. But we cannot ignore the case that can, and will, be made to support the building of new homes and other development needed to ensure the continuing prosperity of the District.

Because we all know our District so well, I believe we are best placed to get this delicate balance right. So, my message to you this evening is that we all have a responsibility to our residents to actively support and engage in the Plan process. The reality is that, if we do not, we run the risk that these important decisions could be taken out of all our hands.

The need for more affordable homes in Mole Valley has always been something on which Members on all sides of the Chamber have agreed and, last year, the Executive resolved that we would undertake further work to assess the viability of the Council itself building, managing and maintaining affordable housing, particularly in the light of Transform Leatherhead. It is now widely recognized that local authorities have a key role to play in

accelerating delivery of new homes but there are many ways in which this can be done. I am delighted that we have been able to secure the services of one of the country's leading experts in this field, Natalie Elphicke of the Housing and Finance Institute to advise us on this. Nathalie is co-author of the Elphicke-House Report to the DCLG - 'From statutory provider to Housing Delivery Enabler: A review of the local authority role in housing supply'. Natalie and her HFI colleagues recently spent a day with us assessing the factors that will help determine this Council's potential role in the housing market. We will shortly be receiving feedback on the assessment and I look forward to updating Members on this important issue shortly.

This evening the Council has agreed to appoint Karen Brimacombe as our new Chief Executive. Yvonne Rees has left us with a really a positive legacy of innovation and partnership working and this will provide Karen with a solid foundation on which to build.

Yvonne and I often described this Council as punching above its weight and that claim is well founded. As the 2016/17 out-turn report showed, rigorous fiscal control has not only protected front line services, but enabled us to invest in our priorities such as housing and supporting vulnerable families. We can boast an award winning leisure facility in the Dorking Halls and award winning performance in tackling homelessness, customer service and communications; we have some of the best recycling figures in the country, an ambitious and well supported Masterplan to transform one of our market towns and much more. Major projects such as the Deepdene Trail have exceeded expectations and I'm confident that the new facilities at Meadowbank will do the same.

But the challenges we face are considerable. I have already talked about the need to work together in the interests of our residents in the context of the Local Plan. Even more immediately, we need to address the consequences of the County's £100m savings programme which could see cuts to some of the services most valued by our residents.

There will be no easy answers but I believe we have a duty to our residents to adopt a responsible approach and, to my mind that means, if we are going to object to cuts and change, we must be prepared to put forward alternative, realistic and practical solutions. I want to assure Members this evening that my Administration is committed to working constructively with everyone whether it's Parish Councils, Residents Associations, or, indeed, the Opposition in this Chamber, in the interests of our residents – they deserve no less.'

23. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements – 1st April to 30th June 2017

The Council considered the report set out at pages 2 to 3 of the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

24. Reports of Executive Members

Councillor Lucy Botting (Executive Member for Wellbeing)

The Executive Member for Wellbeing updated Council on the following:

Wellbeing Prescription

Mole Valley's 12 month pilot Wellbeing Prescription Scheme in partnership with Tandridge and Reigate and Banstead went live on the 8th May at the 4 selected medical practices - Medwyn Medical Practice in Dorking, Brockwood Medical Practice in North Holmwood, Ashlea Medical Practice (Linden House) in Leatherhead and Molebridge Medical Practice in Fetcham and North Leatherhead.

A fulltime Wellbeing Advisor has been recruited who works one day each week in each of the practices to reduce existing pressure on GPs and provide support and advice to patients who would benefit from non-clinical intervention.

In the first 8 weeks of the pilot we have had 103 referrals for a wide variety of reasons, the most common of which has been for low level mental health, social isolation and weight management.

Heartstart

After a very successful 18 months of activity with local communities to deliver life saving skills training including the use of defibrillators, the Council's partnership project has upskilled over 800 people across the district. There are now 39 public access defibrillators available on public buildings across the whole of the district.

The focus for this project now is on young people and working with schools and youth groups to raise awareness and increase the skills of the younger generation in life saving skills.

Surrey Youth Games

With nearly 500 registrations this year across all sports, 220 children were selected to represent Mole Valley at the competition weekend at Surrey Sports Park on 17 and 18th June. The weekend was a great success for Mole Valley, achieving Gold Medals in Tennis and Squash, a Silver Medal

in Badminton and Bronze Medals in Netball, Table Tennis and Swimming. In addition to the team medals there were individual silver and bronze medals in the girls junior and senior Judo.

After the free coaching sessions in the various sports and for those selected to represent Mole Valley, the taste of competition, many of these children will be continuing with the club activity.

Small-Grants Community Fund

The deadline for the first quarter of the new Small-Grants Community Fund was on 30th June 2017. Seven applications were received for amounts ranging from £250 to £4,000. The application will go through a rigorous assessment process and successful applicants will be notified towards the end of July.

There will be continued promotion of the fund with a particular emphasis on smaller organisations who require funding to carry out valuable work and projects within our communities.

Community Safety

Consultation on a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Meadowbank recreation area in Dorking will be launching next week and will be open for 5 weeks. This consultation will be asking for residents' views on the imposition of restrictions over anti-social drinking and drug use in the area, as well as dog fouling. If a PSPO is implemented for the area, it will be enforced by a combination of CCTV, Council and Police patrols.

Thanks was also extended to Councillor Joe Crome and the Leatherhead Youth Project for organising the Kings and Queens event in North Leatherhead for the elderly and socially isolated.

Councillor Duncan Irvine (Executive Member for Planning)

The Executive Member for Planning updated Council on the following:

Future Mole Valley

The first stage of public consultation on 'Future Mole Valley: Issues and Options' began on 1 July and engagement statistics for the website is high than anticipated and progress is strong.

Capel Neighbourhood Development Plan

The report of the independent examiner was received at the end of June. I am pleased to report that he upheld the views of MVDC. Subject to discussions with Capel Parish Council, I anticipate that a suitably modified Neighbourhood Plan will be presented to the next meeting of Mole Valley District Council in October.

Development Management

Application processing continues to be the main focus in the Department given Government targets and customer expectations. There has been a 4.6% increase of submitted applications in 2017 when compared to the corresponding time period in 2016. Agency staff have been employed as case officers for application processing owing to the difficulty of recruiting permanent new staff. High levels of performance are being achieved and are continuing from 2016. All Government targets are being met and exceeded resulting in a timely service for customers, with 100% of major applications and 86% of minor applications processed within the eight week target.

A significant amount of alleged breaches of planning control are continuing to be received. Since the last update, 4 Enforcement Notices have been served in respect of unauthorised development. The temporary backlog of enforcement work is slowly reducing with the help of agency staff. Recruitment is currently underway to fill vacant posts with permanent staff.

Councillor David Mir (Executive Member for Environment and Parking)

The Executive Member for Environment and Parking updated Council on the following:

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health and Licencing Shared Service was launched on 1st April and currently covers Mole Valley and Tandridge. The main aim of this combined approach is to deliver a more joined up and resilient service that focuses on sharing expertise and best practice and driving improvements in customer service.

We are currently recruiting the permanent Strategic Partnership Manager who, once in post, will perform a pivotal role in shaping and developing the new service.

An early example of how the Shared Service approach is working is around the Licensing Act process. Both authorities are now using Tandridge District Council's Customer Services Unit to undertake administration of the Temporary Event Notification system. As part of this process Ward Members are being advised of Temporary Event Notifications.

We are currently undertaking a review to ensure the Shared Service identifies efficiencies and improvements. This project work includes reviewing the website information to improve customer experience, standardising and improving response times and identifying ways to streamline performance monitoring.

Parking

Following the completion of the Dorking Parking Review, the changes to the car parking arrangements took effect from Monday 3 July. North Street and West Street car parks have become short stay only car parks. This was in response to feedback from West Street Traders, and initial feedback has been positive. We have also implemented 24 free 30 minutes parking bays in car parks across Dorking to encourage people to 'pop and shop'. The provision of these spaces are fully in line with what was requested by the Chamber of Commerce.

Environmental Enforcement

We continue to take a proactive approach toward environmental enforcement. Five Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) have been accepted. Four are for fly-tipping and one for littering. The formal action taken so far included a formal caution being accepted by a tradesman and FPN's being paid by a householder, building contractor and property maintenance company. Despite not carrying out the fly-tip themselves, those who accepted fault failed to undertake the necessary checks to ensure the waste was going to be disposed of in a legal manner by a third party. The littering FPN was issued after a witness submitted photographic evidence to MVDC that captured the littering taking place in Dorking.

The latest fly tipping figures show a downward trend since the changes made to the Community Recycling Centres in September 2106. The average number of fly tips from April – August 2016 was 43 per month and since September 2016 it has been 38.5 per month. MVDC continues to work with Surrey County Council and the National Trust to tackle this on-going issues

Councillor Corinna Osborne-Patterson (Executive Member for Communities, Services and Housing)

The Executive Member for Communities, Services and Housing provided the following update:

RideLondon

This year's event is fast approaching (Sunday 30th July) and residents and businesses on the route will have received the detailed event leaflet. Bespoke information for communities on the route is available.

Officers from the Strategic Leadership and Economic Development Teams have been working with Local Businesses to explore ways to promote local businesses on the day and encourage visitors to come and watch the event. In response to these discussions, we have developed a 'pop-up' website www.hellomolevalley.co.uk. The site will host useful information, such as advising visitors where they can park and key vantage points to watch the day unfold. Businesses are encouraged to promote their business on the site, with the opportunity to promote special event day offers.

Wheels, Feet and Hooves

As has been noted in previous updates we are creating a Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the Surrey Hills. The "Wheels, Feet and Hooves" rural tourism project is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and delivered on behalf of Mole Valley District Council by Tourism South East & Associates.

The project aims to promote the rural tourism credentials of the area and, at the same time, take into consideration the needs of visitors, residents, businesses and the environment. It will explore how to manage the popularity of Mole Valley as a leisure destination as well as capitalise on the opportunities that such popularity brings.

The project will be officially launched at a business event on Thursday 13th July. This event will provide businesses with an opportunity to find out more about the project and how it might benefit them and encourage their involvement. As part of the project we will be looking at holding a number of workshops for Councillors, Community Representatives and Rural Businesses to share their opinions and help shape the DMP.

Rural Community Strategy

The Mole Valley Rural Community Strategy was approved early this year and will receive its formal launch on 13th July. It focuses on the issues and challenges facing the rural economy, rural communities and the rural environment and identifies actions to address these. Preparatory work will soon be starting to plan the Annual Rural Community Summit (ARCS) and this will ensure that the rural agenda and rural economy, in particular, are kept at the forefront. The strategy will also help inform the development of and support the Mole Valley Economic Prosperity Strategy.

25. Questions to Members of the Executive

(1) The following question was submitted by Councillor Bridget Kendrick:

“Mole Valley District Council made a commitment in October 2015 to take in 5 refugee families each year for 5 years. Is this commitment being met?”

Councillor Vivienne Michael responded as follows:

“As Cllr Kendrick says, in October 2015, Mole Valley District Council’s committed to resettle five households for each of the five years of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement scheme. We were one of the first Surrey authorities to commit to the scheme and we made one of the highest commitments in the County.

The five per year target was broken down to two families per year to be housed in the private rented sector and three single people over the age of 55 to be accommodated each year in housing association accommodation for the over 55s.

Since June 2016, six households have commenced resettlement in Mole Valley under the scheme, though three have since moved to other areas. Three are being resettled for the long term.

While there were some early referrals for the over 55’s properties, the Home Office does not have any current suitable referrals and this element of the Council’s commitment is unlikely to be met. This means the Council’s target for the future is more likely to be 10 households over the five years of the programme. As mentioned, three households have been resettled so far.

The challenge remains to find suitable properties in the private rented sector at reasonable rents to enable the Council to meet its target.”

Councillor Bridget Kendrick asked the following supplemental question:

“To clarify, are you still committed to meeting the commitment?”

Councillor Vivienne Michael replied as follows:

“We remain committed to the original commitment we made, but as stated in my previous answer, we are in the hands of the Home Office and the availability of persons coming forward under the scheme, but I would like to think that we can meet our commitments.”

(2) The following question was submitted by Councillor Claire Malcomson:

“Drastic cuts of £2million per year for 3 years made by Surrey County Council have already lead to the closure of over 30 Sexual Health clinics throughout Surrey. This includes all those that were held in Dorking and most in Leatherhead, which now only has 2 sessions a week instead of the many available before April. Unfortunately most people cannot visit these which are held on Monday and Friday mornings. What will, or can, Mole Valley District Council do to help and support those in need of STI advice, unwanted pregnancies and contraceptives, especially the young?”

Councillor Lucy Botting responded as follows:

“Cllr Malcolmson has raised this issue a number of times to myself and to officers within the Council over a number of months. She has been given a response on every occasion. She has also raised this with the relevant Cabinet Members at Surrey County Council: namely Councillor Hall and Councillor Clack. Both have responded.

Surrey County Council has been working hard with Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) who won the contract to provide the service. Surrey County Councillors Tim Hall and Helyn Clack have been working with CNWL to ensure the service is right for our residents across Surrey.

The new model is still in its infancy, being in the first six months of operation. CNWL are working with residents to ensure that the service is the one that is actually needed across Surrey. Things will be

rolled out in future months as gaps become apparent, but there is a willingness to look at a new model of working and not just waiting rooms and clinics as previously was the case. Instead online advice, telephone advice and satellite services would also be used - something very different and more in keeping with young people.

I should remind Councillor Malcomson that in 2015 our rates of teenage pregnancy were among the lowest of English counties. We are monitoring that and it is really positive. Equally GP's across Surrey provide sexual health advice, contraception advice and NHS England, Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group and Surrey Heartlands are all monitoring this with Surrey County Council."

Councillor Claire Malcomson asked the following supplemental question:

"Why isn't the Executive doing more to help provide better services in this area?"

Councillor Lucy Botting replied as follows:

"It is Surrey County Council who have procured the service and NHS England along with Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group who are working with them to improve that service. County Councillor's Tim Hall and Helyn Clark are working closely with the Commissioner and I would suggest if you have anything that you would like to ask or need further information, then speak directly to these councillors.

We are supportive and listening, but I would suggest that Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust are a very good provider of these services and have only been in place for three months, so please give them time and refer any questions to the County Council, as we are only supporters and listeners on behalf of local residents."

(3) The following question was submitted by Councillor Claire Malcomson:

"The secondary aquifer on Leith Hill is made of Greensand/Sandstone, one of the weakest rocks and known to be porous. Does Mole Valley District council have knowledge or evidence that Acid Stimulation has been successful and not contaminated local water supplies in similar areas anywhere else in the UK, as there is evidence that fracking, which is very similar to Acid Stimulation, in the USA and Australia has led to water pollution. Do we know it is safe and can we prove this?"

Councillor David Mir responded as follows:

"This question needs to be addressed by the Environment Agency as they are the responsible regulatory authority. Officers have raised this matter with them and are awaiting a response. As soon as this is available it will be circulated to all Members."

(4) The following question was submitted by Councillor Margaret Cooksey:

"Please could the appropriate portfolio holder tell us how many residential units have been approved by MVDC over the past five years in both Leatherhead and Dorking where no car parking spaces have been available. If the figures could be given separately for both towns and the number of units identified by numbers of bedrooms please?"

Councillor Duncan Irvine responded as follows:

"Aggregated data is not held for new homes without car parking. However, over the period 2012 – 2017 there has been a net increase of 61 new homes in Dorking and 71 homes in Leatherhead where there has been no increase in parking spaces (but where existing parking spaces may have been retained). All were one or two bedroom dwellings. A significant element of these schemes is office-to-residential conversions carried out under permitted development rights.

When considering the need for parking, the National Planning Policy Framework advises that authorities should take into account the accessibility of the development, its type, mix and use, the availability of and opportunities for public transport and car ownership levels. The thrust of the guidance is to promote sustainable forms of development wherever possible to avoid a reliance on

the private motor car. Our Core Strategy and Local Plan policies are consistent with this advice. In locations with good accessibility to public transport, services and facilities it may be reasonable to permit development with limited or no parking provision.

In other words, in these circumstances we do not necessarily see a problem with an increase in dwellings without a directly proportionate increase in parking spaces. Where new homes require planning applications, the parking element will continue to be a case-by-case consideration, taking into account our policies, national guidance and the availability of other forms of transport.”

Councillor Margaret Cooksey asked the following supplemental question:

“Is the Portfolio Holder indicating from his previous answer that he does not recognise the difficulties arising from the above for our residential streets and parking spaces, not to mention the new residents? Does he have any idea how the issue can be rectified?”

Councillor Duncan Irvine replied as follows:

“I do recognise it, but as any Member involved in the Development Control Committee would know, planning decisions are always a case of balance and one of the main things we have to balance is the need for further homes. I recognise in some cases that lack of parking provision is a problem, however I would say that it can be the case that there are people who don’t own or use cars. I’m not saying it isn’t a problem, but it is a balance that needs to be struck and in some case it may be appropriate to proceed without parking provision.”

(5) The following question was submitted by Councillor Clayton Wellman:

“With concerns high over the breaching of planning conditions, both in terms of the construction and then stipulations on such things as use, please can we have an update from the Executive as to what the position is with regard to the recruitment and deployment of Enforcement Officers?”

Councillor Duncan Irvine responded as follows:

“There are three posts in the Planning Enforcement Team; two Senior Planning Enforcement Officers and a Planning Enforcement Officer. The two Senior Planning Enforcement Officer posts are currently filled by contractors. A recruitment process is soon to be launched to fill the two Senior Enforcement Officer posts with permanent members of staff.

At least one alleged breach of planning control is reported to the Enforcement Team every day. Three hundred and twenty one cases were logged in 2016. The MVDC Enforcement Local Plan was adopted in 2012 and explains how alleged breaches of planning control will be investigated within 2, 5 or 10 working days depending on the nature and scope of the alleged breach. The resources of the Enforcement Team are deployed to achieve these targets.”

Councillor Clayton Wellman asked the following supplemental question:

“Despite the Executive’s assurances, we are in a crisis situation and a good deal more resources or efficiency are required to fix it. In this District there are a great many situations where enforcement is desperately required, for example where Enforcement Officers have not been to a site after several months of repeated reporting. The reality is a far cry from the timeline stated, so isn’t this Administration sending out a message to developers that Mole Valley is a free for all where they can do what they please?”

Councillor Duncan Irvine replied as follows:

“No, this Administration is not sending out that message and that is why we approved additional budgeting in this year’s Budget for another Enforcement Officer. If there are specific concerns about cases which have not been attended within the appropriate time frames, then I would urge Members to report these to the Enforcement team directly.”

(6) The following question was submitted by Councillor Clayton Wellman:

“At the two Members events where the housing requirements and future economic prosperity of Mole Valley were discussed, Members were (on both occasions) requested not to question the figures. Members wholeheartedly entered into that spirit. However, in the SHMA it specifically says the housing demand figures are not to be transposed into the Local Plan and that they are in fact a “starting point for the debate on the number of new homes”. Therefore, basing the current public consultation on this figure is premature.

Can the Executive please tell Members when the opportunities will be given to Members for extensive and open debate on this matter and what form the sessions will take?”

Councillor Duncan Irvine responded as follows:

“There seem to be two possible interpretations of this question. The first is that it is asking when will we be able to debate the result of the SHMA, being the Objectively Assessed Need figure of 5,900 homes. The second is when will we be able to debate how many of those homes we intend to include as the final housing target in the Local Plan.

This may be a good moment to remind us all that the 5,900 homes is not the final number of homes for which we expect to provide land. I have mentioned this several times in this Chamber, I mentioned it the other day whilst being interviewed on Radio Surrey, and I have mentioned it to every person that I have so far spoken to at consultation events. But I am happy to cover it again: our objectively assessed need is the unconstrained demand for housing. The demand for housing is constrained by such things as the fact that we are about 75% Green Belt, as well as everything else detailed in the constraints analysis which we have carried out and published. This will be factored in to the plan-making process. The statement that basing the consultation on this figure is premature is incorrect, because until we can give people a ball park figure for what the housing need is, we cannot meaningfully consult and until we know how people would like us to meet housing need, we cannot decide how much of that need we can meet.

To turn to the Objectively Assessed Need itself. In September of last year this was published within the SHMA which has been available on the MVDC website since that time. Anyone wishing to critique its methodology since then could have done so by discussing it with me or Mr Davies, our Planning Policy Manager. I am not aware of any such discussions having taken place. Some members have indicated a wish to understand better how the SHMA was carried out. In response to this discussion at Scrutiny Committee in June, I requested Mr Davies to organise a seminar on this matter. Mr Davies did so and that took place in June although was perhaps a little under-subscribed. A written summary of the methodology and key results was circulated to all members who attended that briefing, and is available on MOSS.

Nevertheless there remains a feeling among some members that we still do not know enough about the SHMA in order to have confidence in its principal finding – the Objectively Assessed Need. In response to this I have requested Mr Davies to organise a second seminar, this one to be given not by himself but by Cobweb themselves – the consulting team who wrote the SHMA. We were presented with the opportunity to have this in August. But I have declined this and requested a date in September to reflect concerns some members may have had, at being unable to attend due to holidays at this time.

If after this second seminar, and twelve months after the original publication of the SHMA, Members still have concerns over its methodology, we can discuss those either directly, or in the Planning Policy Working Group, or in separately arranged meetings. There is no intention to have a debate as such in this chamber on this matter.

I suspect in any case, the real subject matter of any such debate would not be the methodology of the SHMA, but rather the principle of whether or not we have a responsibility to provide housing stock for people wanting to move into the district from outside – perhaps for example some of our net inward commuters. I would suggest members represent such views via the PPWG. Any member is welcome to request to me as Chairman of that group a one-off invitation.

The second interpretation of this question is that it may be asking when will we decide how much of the Objectively Assessed Need we should attempt to meet. And the answer to that is quite simple – at

a later stage in the process, after the current consultation is complete. We cannot meaningfully debate how much of the Objectively Assessed Need we should try to meet until we know how people would most like us to go about doing so, because some of the options on which we are consulting yield more homes than others. Again I would envisage most of this debate taking place in the PPWG because obviously it is sensible to try and achieve consensus in that specialised body before bringing things forward to full Council. If any member feels they would like to be in the PPWG and are not, then that is a conversation they need to have with the leader of their group.

The final point I would make is this: The Local Plan is a long process. It is not going to be finished next week, and as we proceed we will continue to be as open as we reasonably can be about everything which we are doing, as we have been, across the Chamber.”

Councillor Clayton Wellman asked the following supplemental question:

The question is not about the methodology, rather the interpretation of the figure and based on the answer just given, I think the Executive should concede that describing the presumed shortfall on the consultation as a requirement is misleading to consultees and this should be changed. Since the Executive has been clear that we need residents honest views to shape the figure going forward, an additional option should also be added to the greenfield section of the consultation, so we can get a statistical representation of how many residents actually oppose building on greenfield sites in order that we might take their views into account. Would the Executive agree with these statements?”

Councillor Duncan Irvine replied as follows:

“I don’t accept that this consultation is in any respect misleading. If I was appearing in a video describing it as a plan for the homes of the children of Mole Valley specifically, then that would be fair enough to make that comment, but that is not what we are doing. We are looking at the overall requirement for the district and part of that requirement involves people coming into the district from outside, just as it involves people leaving the district and I don’t think there is anything disingenuous about that.

(7) The following question was submitted by Councillor Joe Crome:

“The Department for Communities and Local Government recently released new statistics relating to homelessness, showing that in Mole Valley, households 'accepted as homeless and in priority need' has risen from 12 in 2009/10 to 28 in 2016/2017 (increase of 133%). Can the Executive member confirm this current number of 'accepted homeless' in Mole Valley and detail this Council's plans to support and house those residents?”

Councillor Corinna Osborne-Patterson responded as follows:

“The homelessness acceptance rate fluctuates from year to year and it is better to look at it on a year by year basis. Last year’s acceptance level of 28 was similar to levels in 2012/13 to 2014/15, which averaged at 29 per year. The Housing Team is equipped to manage these levels and continues to pursue the objectives of the approved five year Homelessness Strategy to manage the process, which includes achieving the Gold Standard. The Housing Team has commenced preparations for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, which will change the approach to homelessness for all local authorities. More detailed preparations will be made when the Code of Guidance to accompany the legislation is published in September of this year. The Department of Communities and Local Government is providing specific grants to assist with implementation.

Homelessness Acceptances 2009/10 to 2016/17

2009/10 - 12

2010/11 - 13

2011/12 - 25

2012/13 - 29

2013/14 - 29

2014/15 - 28

2015/16 - 41

2016/17 - 28.”

Councillor Joe Crome asked the following supplemental question:

“I appreciate being given the figures and I agree we have a very good Housing team, but I would like to pick up on one area in particular. Are there plans for the future to have more temporary accommodation within the district?”

Councillor Corinna Osborne-Patterson replied as follows:

“We are looking at additional temporary accommodation in the district wherever possible when it is available, but there are occasions when people need to be rehoused outside the district depending on what is available, but the Housing team are doing all they can to help people in need.”

(8) The following question was submitted by Councillor Joe Crome:

“In light of recent cyber security attacks which have involved theft of data from the NHS and many companies across the UK and the world, what steps has Mole Valley District Council taken to ensure that sensitive data and data of our residents is protected from hacking and cyber-attacks?”

Councillor Metin Huseyin responded as follows:

“The risk of CyberCrime and its potential impact is identified and mitigated in the Council’s Strategic Risk Register which was most recently approved by the Executive on 27th June; this risk also has many other levels of regular monitoring and control, from annual assessments required by GCHQ to a standing item at the ICT team fortnightly briefings.

A major part of our response to cybercrime is the ongoing development of our security infrastructure, as new cyber-threats are identified, and solutions developed. This is known as patching. New threats and patches are identified constantly through well established Government and industry protocols.

Within MVDC daily checks are made of Government & industry warnings, with any new significant threat resulting in action to schedule the patching of all systems immediately.

In relation to lower level threats, our externally facing servers are patched automatically weekly and internal servers are patched in 4 groups, one group per week in a four-week cycle.

Our rigorous systems patching regime ensured that the patch that was needed to avoid the recent incident that affected the NHS and many others, had already been implemented as a matter of routine when it was first released by Microsoft, many weeks earlier.

Equally importantly, e-Learning training has been in place to educate all staff as to how incidents happen, what to look out for and how to avoid problems, particularly in relation to attack via emails. ‘Mystery Shopper’ style tests are regularly undertaken by the ICT team, which test staff responses to the sort of emails that would lure them to divulge information or access suspect websites. Additional training is subsequently provided to those that are taken in by the test.

Further, we constantly monitor and adopt industry best practice and recommendations where ever it can be applied. Most recently the Council has adopted the central government Domain Name Service which is the equivalent of the internet “phone book” – this will help to ensure that routes to the known cyber-crime sites are effectively blocked.

All of that said, the risk of cybercrime will always remain, as the cybercriminals will constantly try to keep ahead of the game. We can never become complacent and must keep our guard up, but we are confident that the Council is as protected as it is possible to be, while balancing the business need to be connected to the outside world in order to deliver services to residents."

(9) The following question was submitted by Councillor David Harper:

"Standard Life Property Investment Trust yields a historical 5.33% across an investment portfolio of about £350 Million.

Isn't this a lower risk, higher return, than the current direct investment approach and with it being a liquid traded share, capital gains can be realised more easily?"

Councillor Charles Yarwood responded as follows:

"Our Asset Investment Strategy has been running for almost a year now and it is an appropriate time to review its workings and outcomes.

I have already asked Officers to prepare a review for members' consideration in the autumn and, as part of this review, to explore the potential for investing in ready made property portfolios as well as individual assets. The product identified by Councillor Harper is one such portfolio, but there are many others, and it would be inappropriate at this time to comment on any individual portfolio. Any decision to invest in a particular portfolio would require a significant 'due diligence' process, precisely in order to understand the relationship between return and risk.

The work will be completed and presented to Members in September / October. My understanding is that the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee is considering the creation of a Scrutiny Panel to scrutinise the Asset Investment Strategy, in which case I would welcome that Panel considering this Review, before proceeding to Council."

26. Motions

Motion 1/2017

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Stephen Cooksey and seconded by Councillor Bridget Kendrick:

" This Council:-

1. recognises that the reduction in opening hours and the imposition of charges at Community Recycling Centres have proved inconvenient and unpopular with residents and have encouraged an increase in fly tipping;
2. notes that the County Council is currently undertaking a consultation with a view to closing the Dorking Recycling Centre along with 3 others in the County, ending the free allowance of non-household waste, closing the remaining CRC's on two week days and restricting the use of vans and trailers at those that remain open;
3. opposes all of these measures but in particular strongly opposes the proposed closure of the Ranmore Road Tip and will take all possible action to persuade the County Council not to take this action;
4. resolves, as a matter of urgency, to bring forward proposals for Mole Valley Council to take over responsibility for running the facility in the event of the County Council proceeding with the closure."

The Council resolved to take the motion on the night.

Members debated the motion in full. There was support across the Chamber for the proposed Motion, however there was also concern that the fourth part of the motion was potentially

restrictive and committed MVDC to taking on the cost of operating the Community Recycling Centre's when other options needed to be explored. As such, the proposer of the Motion, Councillor Stephen Cooksey suggested the following amendment:-

4. resolves, as a matter of urgency, to bring forward positive options that would retain the Dorking CRC and reasonable opening hours at Leatherhead.

RESOLVED: That the motion as amended be accepted.

Motion 2/2017

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Bridget Kendrick and seconded by Councillor Margaret Cooksey:

"This Council welcomes the fact that the commitment in the 2017 Conservative Manifesto to legislate to give permitted development rights to non-fracking shale drilling applications does not appear in the Queens Speech. However this remains a Conservative manifesto commitment which could be implemented in the future.

Therefore, this Council resolves to inform the government that it strongly opposes any attempt to remove the right of Mole Valley Council to be consulted on applications for drilling for oil and gas in our communities and would support moves to strengthen local decision making powers with regard to such applications."

The Council resolved to take the motion on the night.

Members debated the motion in full. It was agreed across the Chamber that local input in to planning matters should be retained and the motion was agreed, with the following minor amendment to the second paragraph to reflect the uncertainty over the implementation of the Conservative Manifesto

"Therefore, this Council resolves to inform the government that it **would** strongly opposes any attempt to remove the right of Mole Valley **District** Council to be consulted on applications for drilling for oil and gas in our communities and would support moves to strengthen local decision making powers with regard to such applications"

RESOLVED: That the motion as amended be accepted.

27. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

That members of the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

28. Acquisition of Property Investment

Part II

The Council considered a confidential report recommending the addition of a property investment to the Council's Capital Programme.

RESOLVED:

That the property investment, at a value as detailed in the report submitted, be added to the Council's Capital Programme for 2017/18.