

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive
held at Surrey Heath House on 1
March 2016**

+ Cllr Moira Gibson (Chairman)

+ Cllr Richard Brooks	+ Cllr Craig Fennell
+ Cllr Mrs Vivienne Chapman	+ Cllr Josephine Hawkins
- Cllr Colin Dougan	+ Cllr Charlotte Morley

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

In Attendance: Cllr Rodney Bates, Cllr Alan McClafferty and Cllr Chris Pitt

69/E Minutes

The open and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

70/E Update on the 3SC Devolution proposal to Government

The Leader of the Council provided an update on a meeting of all Leaders in the 3SC Devolution proposal, held on 8 April 2016. Concerns had been expressed as:

- (i) The Government proposals had yet to be published and the contribution of individual Councils was not known;
- (ii) The proposals tabled were Sussex centric, with most infrastructure proposals in Sussex, rather than in Surrey;
- (iii) The Government had been unable to indicate what infrastructure funding would be transferred to Shire Counties;

It had been made clear, at the 3SC meeting, that Councils would want infrastructure in place before delivering housing.

Members considered options around 'double devolution' and suggested that devolution round the EM3 LEP and a Northern/Southern configuration could prove more productive for this Borough.

Resolved, that

- (i) **The contents of the report be noted; and**
- (ii) **The Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to feed comments back to the 3SC devolution bid team.**

71/E Response to the Consultation on the New Homes Bonus

The Executive considered a report on the Government's consultation on the future of the New Homes Bonus and a draft response from the Council thereon.

Members noted that the New Homes Bonus had been funded by top slicing business rates and reducing grant. The new proposals focussed on making it more difficult to achieve the bonus, with a view to reducing the overall cost so that the funds saved could be transferred to the Better Care Fund, to assist with pressures in Adult Social Care.

The Executive noted that the proposed changes would adversely affect this Council and agreed to respond to the consultation, opposing the proposed reduction.

Resolved to authorise the Executive Head of Finance to draft the response to the Consultation on the New Homes Bonus at Annex A to the agenda report and make any changes required in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, for a letter to be sent under the Portfolio Holder's signature.

72/E St Georges Industrial Estate

The Executive considered a report on St Georges Industrial Estate, which had recently been purchased by Surrey Heath Borough Council. There were 23 Light Industrial Units let out to businesses on varying terms and the report highlighted the need to be able to make commercial decisions within commercial tenant timescales.

The Head of Legal Services already had delegated authority on a number of estate management matters and it was proposed that the Scheme of Delegation of Functions to Officers be amended to authorise the Head of Legal Services to grant, in consultation with either the Council Leader or the Transformation Portfolio Holder, leases not subject to the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and for a term of up to 25 years.

Resolved, that the Scheme of Delegation of Functions to Officers be amended to authorise the Head of Legal Services, in addition to those delegations already in place in respect of estate management matters relating to St Georges Industrial Estate, to grant, in consultation with either the Council Leader or the Transformation Portfolio Holder, leases not subject to the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and for a term of up to 25 years.

73/E Write-off of Irrecoverable Revenues Bad Debts

The Executive considered a report proposing the write off of irrecoverable revenue bad debts over £1,500.

Members noted a schedule of bad debts for both Council Tax and Business Rates and sought clarification on the following:

- (i) Debtors in Prison – For those debtors listed as being in prison, what basis was used for determining whether or not to write off the bad debt?
- (ii) Longer Term Debts – Referring to businesses which had been in debt for a number of years, had mechanisms been put in place to trigger earlier actions?

The Finance Portfolio Holder reported that, although bad debts were written off, the debtors would be pursued should that possibility arise in the future. Mechanisms had been introduced to trigger winding up actions in response to multiple rent arrears. In relation to debtors in prison, whilst it was likely that the write-off was proposed due to their lack of assets rather than incarceration, the Portfolio Holder would review both areas and provide Members with an update.

Resolved, that bad debts totalling £47,722.84 in respect of Council Tax and £156,215.47 in respect of Non-Domestic Rates to be written-off in 2015-16.

74/E Collectively Camberley Business Improvement District

The Executive considered an update on the progress made by the Camberley Town Centre Future Management Working Group, in particular, in respect of recommendations to the BID, in relation to matters which the Council considered should be included in the prospectus for the BID renewal.

Members were reminded that the Council would be required to make a decision later in 2016 as to whether it should vote for a renewed BID. It was also noted that following a soft market testing through surveys, Collectively Camberley had reported that 76% of respondents supported a renewed BID.

Resolved, that the progress made to date by the Camberley Town Centre Future Management Working Group be noted.

75/E Review of Exempt Items

The Executive reviewed the reports which had been considered at the meeting following the exclusion of members of the press and public as they involved the disclosure of exempt information.

RESOLVED, that

- (i) **Annex A, to Item 8 - Write off of Irrecoverable Revenues Bad Debt, remains exempt; and**
- (ii) **The Notes of the meeting of the Camberley Town Centre Future Management Working Group of 8 December 2015 and 12 January 2016 be made public.**

Chairman