

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Performance and Finance Scrutiny
Committee held at Surrey Heath House
on 2 December 2015**

+ Cllr David Allen (Chairman)
+ Cllr Wynne Price (Vice Chairman)

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|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| - Cllr Dan Adams | + Cllr Max Nelson |
| - Cllr Bill Chapman | + Cllr Robin Perry |
| + Cllr Edward Hawkins | - Cllr Chris Pitt |
| + Cllr Paul Ilnicki | + Cllr Darryl Ratiram |
| + Cllr Oliver Lewis | + Cllr Victoria Wheeler |
| + Cllr Jonathan Lytle | + Cllr John Winterton |
| + Cllr Alan McClafferty | |

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper and Cllr Valerie White.

In Attendance: Andrew Crawford, Robert Fox, Cllr Josephine Hawkins, Julia Hutley-Savage, Louise Livingston, Richard Payne and Jenny Rickard.

20/PF Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Josephine Hawkins, the Corporate Portfolio Holder and reminded Members of the areas under the remit of her Portfolio. He also welcomed Louise Livingston and Richard Payne, the Executive Heads of Transformation and Corporate respectively.

The Chairman reported that a Facebook community page had been opened for the Committee, to encourage the public to engage more with the scrutiny function. He encouraged Members to 'like' the page and refer people to it.

21/PF Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 30 September 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

22/PF Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders - Corporate

Councillor Josephine Hawkins reported that she had held the Corporate Portfolio for 6 months. She briefed Members on the various areas covered by her Portfolio, focussing in particular on the following:

- Charities
- Children Champion
- Community Grants
- Complaints Procedure/ Ombudsman Matters
- Communications & Marketing
- Contact Centre

- Democratic Services
- Elections
- Equalities
- Human Resources
- Post & Payments

Councillor Hawkins, in her presentation to Members and responses to Member questions, highlighted the following:

- (i) Charities – Although a number of charities fell within her Portfolio, these were not executive functions and she kept a watching brief only on each.

In specific terms, it was noted that the Citizens Advice Bureau received a grant of £80,000 per annum from the Council, in addition to accommodation. It also received assistance from the Frimley Fuel Allotments Charity.

- (ii) Contact Centre – A new telephony system was being introduced with a ‘Golden Number’. All calls would go through this single number and thereafter be routed to the most appropriate Customer Services Advisor to resolve. Contact Centre staff were learning new skills to enable them to take on further responsibilities. Members would still be able to contact specific officers directly.

New technologies were being investigated for postal processes including hybrid mail, when all correspondence is sent electronically to an external company which could send out post at a significantly reduced cost. There were further options to be explored on e-mails and scanning.

The usage of the Contact Centre had been significantly expanded with Surrey Police and more recently, The Department of Works and Pensions Job Centres Plus having a notable presence.

The Executive Head of Corporate was asked to circulate to Members the contact centre data referred to during the Portfolio Holder’s presentation.

- (iii) Democratic and Electoral Services – A new Committee Management System, Modern.Gov, had been introduced allowing Members to use iPads, markedly reducing the number of hard copy issues of agendas and papers.

Democratic and Electoral Services had been integrated and the transition to Individual Electoral Registration had been completed. The next election would be in May 2016, for the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The previous election, which had incorporated National, Borough and Parish elections, had proved a great success, with staff from all areas of the Council being involved.

In the PCC elections, the Electoral Commission would prescribe the format of the voting sheets. It had not, as yet, proposed any electronic voting or automated counting processes.

The Local Government Boundary Commission would commence a review of the Borough in 2016, looking first at the number of Councillors, then reviewing Ward Boundaries on the basis of their findings.

A Council-wide proposal would be developed by June 2016, with the Commission making any decisions in July 2016. Any changes would then be implemented from May 2019.

- (iv) Media and Marketing – A new website had gone live recently, with 200,000 visitors per Quarter. Electronic payment of bills had increased by 11%, with 4,901 transactions between July and September 2015. Discussions were progressing with 2 other Councils for them to use the website template, with possible long-term support arrangements.

Heathscene was currently distributed to 36,000 households, 3 times a year, at a cost to the Council of 20p per copy.

Business Breakfasts were held twice a year to consult local businesses and make business awards.

From May 2015, Theatre marketing had been centralised with Media and Marketing.

- (v) Children's Champion – The Portfolio Holder had recently supported the Mayor in an initiative for Local Democracy Week, involving a number of children using the Council Chamber to act as a proper Committee and debate a number of key issues. She had also participated in the Young Citizens event, the Youth Council and safeguarding considerations.

Although Acts such as the Children Act impacted more on Surrey County Council, this Council had safeguarding responsibilities and needed a clear framework thereon.

- (vi) Community Grants – A Panel met twice a year to make recommendations to the Executive on applications for community grants. These needed to be for capital expenditure and needed to prove wider public benefit. Recent grants included support for the Camberley Judo Club, Parity for Disability and Deaf Plus.

Grant criteria were available on the Council's Website. The Executive Head of Transformation was asked to circulate to Members the appropriate link. It was emphasised that grants could not be retrospective. E-learning modules were being developed around safeguarding.

- (vii) Human Resources (HR) – The HR Team had been updating the Council's policies through the Joint Staff Consultative Group and had recently completed a successful recruitment process of two Executive Head posts.

The Council was currently seeking to upgrade its Investors In People status from Silver to Gold and had recently received the 2 Ticks Award, from the

Department of Works and Pensions, as a Disability Positive Employer, as part of the Equality and Diversity agenda.

The Council had been proactive in its involvement with work experience and had been involved in the Tomlinscote Career Fair.

Recruitment difficulties had been experienced in Planning and Building Control. Processes were being developed for 'Growing your own' in planning and shared arrangements in Building Control.

The Executive Head of Transformation was asked to circulate data on the proportion of staff who were registered as disabled, with a comparison to peer organisations.

- (viii) Complaints/Equalities – Specific reports would be considered later in the agenda on these 2 areas covered by the Portfolio Holder's brief.

Councillor Hawkins concluded by thanking all the Officers within her Portfolio area for their support and assistance.

Resolved that the report be noted and that the Portfolio Holder be thanked for her presentation and developments within her Portfolio.

23/PF Report on Equalities

The Executive Head of Transformation presented a report on work done in 2015 to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Equality Strategy, as well as demonstrating compliance with the General Equality Duty, through equality impact assessments. Specifically, in relation to 2015, she highlighted the following:

- Officer and Member dementia awareness training undertaken;
- The opening of the Wellbeing (Dementia) Centre and development of the Memory Garden;
- The establishment of the Saturday Club at Windle Valley Centre for carers and the cared for with dementia;
- Capital works have been progressed to make improvements to the gypsy/traveller sites;
- Surrey Heath Faith Forum Lunch held 18 November 2015;
- The appointment of an internal voluntary minority ethnic group staff representative; and
- The appointment of two internal voluntary staff disability mentors.

Equality Impact Assessments had been undertaken on disciplinary, grievance, data protection, smoking and exceptional payments policies.

As previously reported, the Council had achieved a 2 Ticks accreditation, from Job Centres Plus, as a Disability Positive Employer.

Members welcomed developments at the Windle Valley Centre which was considered to be a wonderful asset to both Bagshot and the whole of the Borough.

The Committee considered official Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Borough, noting that, although an additional pitch had been proposed at the Kalima site in Chobham, additional demand had been recognised. The provision of additional pitches was a matter that was under review by Regulatory Services as part of Planning Policy.

Resolved that the update on work to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Council's Equality Strategy and Action Plan be noted.

24/PF Report on Complaints and the Report of the local Government Ombudsman

The Executive Head of Corporate explained the different stages in the Council's Complaints processes, noting that most complaints received were successfully concluded informally under Stage 1 of the Policy. With 87,000 residents, 21 complaints had progressed to Stage 2 of the Policy, a slight increase from 17 in 2014/15.

Of the 21 Stage 2 complaints, 11 had been found to be unjustified, 7 had been partly justified and 3 had been justified.

The main area for complaints had been in the Regulatory area, but, in terms of planning applications determined, the Executive Head of Regulatory reported that complaints had been received on less than 1% of all planning applications.

In the previous year, within the Planning process, 15 complaints, on investigation, had been found to be unjustified, 4 had been partly justified due to an incorrect response or the complainant not receiving a response within the laid down timescales, with only 2 complaints unresolved. The Service viewed complaints as an opportunity to improve, an example being response times in relation to tree issues, which had been identified as slow, but, with training, the Contact Centre had been able to pick up some of the work, thus improving the overall response.

The Local Government Ombudsman had received 6 complaints and enquiries in 2014/15 relating to Surrey Heath Borough Council. Of those, one was upheld, one was not upheld, one was closed after initial enquiries and 3 were referred back for local resolution. There had been no financial implications to the Council.

The Executive Head of Corporate agreed to investigate which complaints were referred back, in relation to which service, what actions had been taken to resolve the complaints locally and what outcomes were achieved.

Members welcomed the low number of Stage 2 formal complaints and those referred to the Local Government Ombudsman and particularly welcomed the approach of using complaints as an opportunity to improve services. It was noted that very few complaints were upheld, either fully or in part.

Resolved, that the Stage 2 & 3 Complaints position and that on Complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman be noted and the Officers be congratulated on the outcomes thereof.

25/PF Work Programme

The work programme for the remainder of the municipal year 2015/16 attached at Annex A, as amended was considered and agreed by the Committee.

Resolved, that the work programme as amended and attached at Annex A, be agreed.

Chairman

ANNEX A**ANNEX A**

**PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16**

DATE	TOPIC	OFFICER
27 January 2016		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders – Business	Andrew Crawford
2	Half Year Treasury Management Report	Katie Jobling
3	Half Year Finance Report	Katie Jobling
4	Update on the Car Parks Strategy	Daniel Harrison
5	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000	Jessica Hooton-Harris
6	Update on the Surrey Local Government Pension Scheme	Kelvin Menon
7.	Peer Review	TBD
8.	Mid-Year Performance Report	Sarah Groom
9.	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford
23 March 2016		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders - Leader and Finance	Andrew Crawford
2	Third Quarter Finance Report	Katie Jobling
3	Corporate Risk	Kelvin Menon
4	Update on the Theatre Performance to end December	Daniel Harrison
5	Committee Work Programme 2014/15	Andrew Crawford

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