

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive
held on 14 March 2023**

+ Cllr Alan McClafferty (Chairman)

+ Cllr Sarah Jane Croke	+ Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans
+ Cllr Colin Dougan	+ Cllr Adrian Page
+ Cllr Shaun Garrett	+ Cllr Robin Perry

+ Present

In Attendance: Cllr Graham Alleway, Cllr Rodney Bates, Cllr Sharon Galliford, Cllr Edward Hawkins, Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam, Cllr Pat Tedder, Cllr Victoria Wheeler and Cllr Valerie White

96/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

97/E Economic Development Strategy 2023-2028

The Executive was informed that the Council's Five Year Strategy included a requirement to deliver a robust Economic Development Strategy supporting economic recovery and sustainable growth in the borough. In December 2022, the Council had appointed an economic growth agency to support the production of the strategy. Members considered the Economic Development Strategy 2023-28, which would replace previous versions of the strategy, and set out a rationale for the economic development aims, objectives and activities of the Council in the years ahead.

It was advised that sitting beneath the Strategy were a number of action plans that would deliver the strategic objectives outlined in the report. The Strategy was reinforced by a large evidence based and consultation had been undertaken with businesses, commercial agents, Surrey County Council, other borough council departments, and the Local Enterprise Partnership in shaping the priorities.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2028, as set out at Annex 1 to the agenda report, be agreed; and**
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Head of Investment and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Transformation to make minor amendments to the strategy should it be required.**

98/E UK Shared Prosperity Fund Year 1 and 2 Projects

The Executive was informed that, following its agreement in July 2022, the Council had submitted its UKSPF Investment Plan to the Government in August 2022. In

January 2023 it had been confirmed that it had been approved and the Council would receive £1m of funding over 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Members considered a report setting out progress of projects agreed for Year 1. A schedule of projects for Year 2 was also considered and endorsed. A further report would be brought to the Executive in September 2023 seeking approval for Year 3 projects. It would also include a mid-year update on Year 2 projects.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the progress made on Year 1 projects funded through the UKSPF, as set out at Annex 1 to the agenda report, be noted;**
- (ii) the Year 2 projects to be funded through the UKSPF, as set out at Annex 2 to the agenda report, be agreed; and**
- (iii) authority be delegated to the Head of Investment and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Transformation to make any minor amends to the Year 2 project programme should it be necessary.**

99/E Surrey Heath Local Development Scheme 2023 - 2026

The Executive was reminded that Local Authorities were required to produce, and keep up to date, a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which set out the future planning documents the Council would be producing within a three-year period and the timescales and key milestones for their preparation. The Council had last published a LDS in February 2022 covering the period to 2025.

An updated LDS had been produced to reflect the revised Local Plan preparation timetable, following the decision to delay publication of the Regulation 19 Local Plan. This decision had been made following a letter from Michael Gove MP announcing a forthcoming consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and elements of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill that affected plan-making.

RESOLVED that the Surrey Heath Local Development Scheme (LDS), as attached at Annex 1 to the agenda report, covering the period 2023 – 2026 be agreed and published on the website.

100/E Local Authority Housing Fund

The Executive was informed that the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had announced a £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund (LHAF), a capital fund apportioned to local authorities to support the delivery of accommodation for households who were residing in the United Kingdom through Afghan or Ukrainian settlement schemes. The LAHF had been developed to address the recognised immediate challenges in securing settled accommodation for these households due to scarcity of social and private rented accommodation.

Members considered a detailed report setting out the resettlement schemes that qualified for this initiative and how the funding could be used. The Council had been provided with an indicative allocation of six 2/3 bedroom 'main element' homes and one larger 4+ bedroom home, the latter of which must be allocated to households in bridging accommodation.

Initial conversations had been undertaken with Registered Providers (Housing Associations) that worked in and around the borough, as this was considered the most appropriate delivery vehicle to achieve the LAHF objectives; discussions with two of the Registered Providers (RPs) approached had proved positive.

The total available grant funding amounted to £1,229,109, to be split over two financial years with 30% paid in the 2022/23 financial year and the remaining 70% in 2023/24. One RP had proposed that the additional contribution for the purchase of the six main element properties could be funded by the RP on the basis the properties were let at affordable rent levels. The funding for the bridging element property was likely to require a contribution from the Council of up to £80,000, with the level of contribution determined by the purchase price. It was suggested that this could be funded through developer contributions for affordable housing which the council currently held.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Council's participation in the Local Authority Housing Fund through the delivery of seven homes by the end of the 2023/24 financial year be agreed; and**

- (ii) the method of delivery of homes under the Local Authority Housing Fund be delegated to the Strategic Director for Environment & Community in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder for Housing, Safeguarding & Support and the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services.**

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that up to £80,000 (including contingency) be drawn down, earmarked from the Council's Affordable Housing reserve to subsidise the purchase price of a property under the 'bridging element' of the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme.

101/E Containment Outbreak Management Funds Awards 2023/24

The Executive was reminded that, during the 2020 pandemic, the Government had allocated funding relating to the Covid pandemic and its aftermath and to support local public health initiatives, known as the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. The funds had originally needed to be spent by 31 March 2023. Following further guidance it had been confirmed that this fund would be extended for a further year until 31 March 2024. This Council had a carry forward amount of £280,521, which would need to be allocated for this period.

A proposed list of projects to be supported during this financial year was considered. Members were informed that the Work Shop Initiative, one of the projects identified, had previously been funded by the DWP but had not yet secured funding for the period post June 2023. It was therefore proposed to allocate £72,000 for the period starting from 1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024; however, if the DWP subsequently confirmed funding for the Work Shop, a further report on alternative use for this funding would be brought to the Executive for consideration.

The Executive was advised that the existing Emergency Food Poverty Grant Scheme was scheduled to close from 31 March 2023. The scheme had provided support to a number of local organisations in helping to retain services, or meeting local need within Surrey Heath. The scheme had a remaining budget of £50,000 and it was proposed to continue the availability of the grants until 31 March 2024 or whenever the funds were exhausted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the projects be awarded and supported as outlined in paragraph 1.7 of the agenda report, with any changes and operational decisions being delegated to the Head of HR, Performance and Communications in consultation with the Support and Safeguarding Portfolio Holder; and**
- (ii) the closing date of the existing Emergency Food Poverty Grant Scheme be extended by 12 months to 31 March 2024 or whenever the funds are exhausted.**

102/E Community Infrastructure Levy

Members were reminded that, at its meeting on 22 February 2023, the Council had considered and agreed a motion proposing to ask the Executive to consider changing the policy for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding (minute 44/C refers). The motion proposed that each ward was allocated 45% of CIL generated from developments in the borough wards, inclusive of the 15% or 25% statutory allocation to Parish Councils, and the current 15% to non-parished ward allocation established by this Council.

The Executive considered a report setting out the relevant issues for consideration of this proposal, including the purpose of CIL funding and whether the Council should deviate from the established CIL funding allocations. Following discussion, it was agreed to adopt a revised CIL policy, as set out at section 5 of the agenda report, that would provide for Parishes and Wards to have the scope to put forward proposals to the Executive for local infrastructure, up to a maximum indicative value of 45% of the CIL receipts generated for their area over the past three years.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the current CIL policy be amended as set out in Section 5 of the agenda report to provide Parishes and Wards that have had recent**

housing development the scope to put forward proposals to the Executive for local infrastructure up to an indicative maximum value of 45% of the CIL receipts generated for their area over the past three years;

(ii) the Council enters into formal consultation on a revised Regulation 123 Statement, which gives weight to the allocation of the main CIL funding for infrastructure in those Parishes and Wards where recent development has taken place alongside the other stated borough-wide infrastructure requirements; and

(iii) officers be asked to bring forward proposals in 2023/24 for a revised CIL Charging Schedule for consideration by the Executive as part of the development of Surrey Heath's new Local Plan.

103/E Fairtrade Status

The Executive was reminded that, at its meeting on 20 April 2022, the Council, had passed a motion agreeing to apply for Fairtrade status by March 2023. A report was considered detailing the five goals required to be achieved prior to application for Fairtrade Borough status, the actions and potential costs required to meet each of these goals, the issues with meeting the March 2023 timescale, and the resources required.

Members considered the options presented in response to the information contained in the report and, following discussion, agreed that Option C, which proposed not progressing the application for Fairtrade status but adopting the broad principles of Fairtrade, was the most feasible option. It was recognised that this would be referred to the Council for consideration at its next meeting.

RESOLVED to note the options for progressing the adoption of Fairtrade Status, to be discussed by the Council at its meeting on 5 April 2023.

104/E Revenue Budget 2022/23 Monitoring Report - Quarter 3

The Executive considered a summary of the budget and financial performance for the first three quarters of 2022/23, up to the accounting period ending on 31 December 2022.

RESOLVED that the spend against the approved revenue budget for the period 1 April to 31 December 2022 and the end of year predicted forecast of full year outturn be noted.

105/E Capital Budget 2022/23 Monitoring Report - 3rd Quarter 2022

The Executive considered a summary of the progress against the 2022/23 capital programme and budget for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022. Proposals for the re-profiling of budgets were also noted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the spend against the approved capital programme for the period 1 April to 31st December 2022 be noted; and
- (ii) the proposed re-profiling of budgets to later years that the Executive would be asked to approve at its meeting on 30th May 2023 be noted.

106/E Write off of Irrecoverable Bad Debts

The Executive considered a report seeking approval to write off bad debts incurred through the non-payment of Council tax and Non-Domestic Rates. All of the debts had been subject to the relevant recovery action and tracing enquiries. The Council's enforcement agents had also been unable to recover the debts from any forwarding address obtained from the tracing undertaken and the debt was now considered irrecoverable.

Members noted that Financial Regulations currently provided for any debts under £1,500 to be written off by officers and it was agreed to review this amount as part of the review of Financial Regulations due to be undertaken within the next 12 months.

RESOLVED that bad debts totalling £142,692.13 in respect of Council Tax and £178,543.89 in respect of Non-Domestic Rates be approved for write off.

107/E Exclusion of Press and Public

In accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as set out below:

Minute	Paragraph(s)
108/E	3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
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108/E Surrey Heath Local Plan: Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace in Surrey Heath

The Executive was reminded that the provision of or financial contribution to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) was a requirement for all planning applications involving new residential development to mitigate the adverse impacts of human activity on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Members considered a report containing recommendations for securing additional SANG to support residential development in the west of the borough.

RESOLVED that

- (i) Authority be delegated to the Head of Investment and Development, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Customer Services and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Services to purchase the site identified in the agenda report for the creation of a new SANG in Surrey Heath, for up to a maximum capital cost as referenced in the agenda report;**
- (ii) A forward payment for the amount set out in the agenda report be made to Bracknell Forest Council to close the existing Memorandum of Understanding Shepherds Meadows SANG and reserve the remaining SANG capacity at Shepherds Meadows; and**
- (iii) Authority be delegated to the Head of Investment and Development, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Customer Services, the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Services to negotiate and enter into Memorandum of Agreements with neighbouring councils for additional SANG capacity, as detailed in the agenda report.**

109/E Lease Renewal

The Executive considered a report setting out proposals for granting a lease.

RESOLVED that the lease be granted, as set out in the agenda report.

110/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 it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information.

Members discussed the bad debts incurred by a limited company that had been written off and agreed that further consideration should be given to whether this information could be made public.

RESOLVED that

- (i) subject to further consideration of whether debts by a limited company could be made public, the annex to the agenda report associated with minute 106/E remain exempt;**

(ii) details concerning the decision at minute 108/E remain exempt until contracts are concluded; and

(iii) details concerning the decision at minute 109/remain exempt until the lease is completed.

Chairman