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Thursday, 6 April 2023

To: The Members of the **EXECUTIVE**
(Councillors: Alan McClafferty (Chairman), Sarah Jane Croke, Colin Dougan,
Shaun Garrett, Rebecca Jennings-Evans, Adrian Page and Robin Perry)

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** will be held at Surrey Heath House and
www.youtube.com/user/SurreyHeathBC on Tuesday, 18 April 2023 at 6.00 pm. The agenda
will be set out as below.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Yours sincerely

Damian Roberts

Chief Executive

AGENDA

Pages

Part 1 (Public)

- | | | |
|----|--|--------|
| 1. | Apologies for Absence | - |
| 2. | Minutes | 3 - 10 |
| | To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 (copy attached). | |
| 3. | Declarations of Interest | - |
| | Members are invited to declare any interests they may have with respect to matters which are to be considered at this meeting. Members who consider they may have an interest are invited to consult the Monitoring Officer or the Democratic Services Officer prior to the meeting. | |
| 4. | Questions by Members | - |

The Leader and Portfolio Holders to receive and respond to questions from Members on any matter which relates to an Executive function in accordance with Part 4 of the Constitution, Section B Executive Procedure Rules, Paragraph 16.

- | | | |
|-----------|---|----------------|
| 5. | Tree Strategy and Action Plan | 11 - 32 |
| 6. | Property Acquisition and Disposal Strategy | 33 - 52 |
| 7. | Exclusion of Press and Public | 53 - 54 |

**Part 2
(Exempt)**

- | | | |
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| 8. | The Square Roof Repairs | 55 - 62 |
| 9. | Review of Exempt Items | 63 - 64 |

To review those items or parts thereof which can be released as information available to the public.

**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 (LAHF), 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).
109/E	3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
110/E	3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

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

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Executive
18 April 2023

Tree Strategy and Action Plan

Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans
Strategic Director/Head of Service	Nick Steevens
Report Author:	Sue McCubbin and Rosie Cox
Key Decision:	Yes
Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report	17 March 2023
Wards Affected:	All

Summary and purpose

Following a notice of motion at Council in December 2021 the Council has developed a Borough-wide Tree Strategy and Action Plan. This acknowledges the Climate Emergency and the Ecological Emergency declared by the Council. The Tree Strategy falls under action ENV04 in the Council's Annual Plan 2022/23.

This Strategy acknowledges how important trees are to the local community, the benefits they bring, and the way that they help to mitigate for the effects of climate change.

Trees are a valuable resource. They contribute to the quality and character of Surrey Heath's unique environment, and to improving air quality, climate amelioration, conserving water, preserving soil, and supporting wildlife. For these reasons and for their intrinsic value, the Council places great weight on the retention of existing trees wherever possible.

The action plan provides direction on how to achieve and maintain high tree coverage within in the borough.

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to resolve that the Tree Strategy and Action Plan, as set out at Annex A to the report, be adopted.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 On the 9 of October 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and

operations, including contractors used, and support the actions being taken by Surrey County Council in this area.

- 1.2 Surrey Heath is committed to showing leadership, working with partners, businesses and residents to undertake local action on the environment. In doing so we will work to protect and enhance our natural environment for future generations.
- 1.3 Surrey Heath has estimated 36.1% of tree cover which is the highest of any local authority in the UK. This strategy acknowledges the importance of trees to the local community, the benefits they bring, and the way that they help to mitigate for the effects of climate change.
- 1.4 Proper planning and maintenance creates healthy and robust woodland which is better able to thrive in our changing climate, provide important habitats, and deliver the multitude of benefits we all appreciate.
- 1.5 Tree Strategy and Action Plan has been developed with the Senior Green Space Officer, the Greenspaces team, the Climate Change Officer, the Arboricultural Officer, and the Planning Policy Team.
- 1.6 The Tree Strategy and Action Plan has been reviewed and endorsed by the Climate Change Working Group and the Villages Working Group.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 The Strategy and Action Plan describe how Surrey Heath Borough Council will approach the management of trees and woodland. It is important that the benefits of trees, hedgerows and woodland are considered in relation to the need for development and, that existing trees are safeguarded and opportunities are taken to increase provision.
- 2.2 The aim of this Strategy is to reinforce the Council's role as a responsible tree owner and to encourage residents and partners to be responsible tree owners. It promotes the planting of trees in new developments, provides direction for the increase of canopy cover, and highlights the environmental importance of trees.

3. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Tree Strategy and Action plan are the first iteration of a strategy which will continue to be amended and enhanced. The actions and objectives will continue to be expanded upon.
- 3.2 The Tree Strategy will be monitored via the Climate Change Action Plan. There will be an annual review of the strategy and any changes proposed will need to be approved by the Strategic Director for Environment and

Community, the Climate Change Portfolio Holder, and the Climate Change Working Group.

3.3 The actions will be delivered within existing resource.

3.4 The executive is invited to suggest any amendments.

4. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy

4.1 **Environment** – Enhancing and improving access to the borough's green spaces and natural environments for the enjoyment of generations to come. The Tree Strategy is part of our commitment to Climate Change alongside local communities and partners.

4.2 **Health and Quality of Life** – Improving health and wellbeing as trees and green spaces are well-known to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.

5. Resource Implications

5.1 Actions in action plan may be dependent on additional funding being secured to deliver against targets.

6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

6.1 Any request for funding will have to follow the Council process of budget bid at budget setting time, or an in-year supplementary estimate.

7. Legal and Governance Issues

7.1 Adoption of the Strategy is an Executive decision.

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

8.1 None

9. Other Considerations and Impacts

Environment and Climate Change

9.1 The Tree Strategy and Action Plan promote the protection and maintenance of trees in line with the Council's environmental goals.

9.2 Trees and hedgerows provide a valuable resource in terms of biodiversity, amenity and for climate change adaption and mitigation, providing habitats for a range of wildlife, and forming a "carbon sink". They reduce the risks of flooding and can help to reduce the Urban Heat Island effect where urban areas experience higher temperatures than non-urban areas.

Equalities and Human Rights

9.3 N/A

Risk Management

9.4 N/A

Community Engagement

9.5 The Strategy and Action plan will be publicly accessible on Surrey Heath Borough Council's website to encourage residents to be responsible tree owners. It will also promote an awareness of the Council's role as a responsible tree owner.

Annexes

Annex A - Surrey Heath Borough Council Tree Strategy and Action Plan 2023-33

Background Papers – None



Surrey Heath Borough Council

TREE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2023-33



April 2023

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Knoll Road, Camberley GU15 3HD



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I. Introduction

This Strategy acknowledges how important trees are to the local community, the benefits they bring, and the way that they help to mitigate for the effects of climate change. The action plan provides direction on how to achieve and maintain high tree coverage within in the borough.

Though no scientific definition exists to separate trees and shrubs, a useful definition for a tree is a woody plant having one erect perennial stem (trunk) at least three inches in diameter at a point 4-1/2 feet above the ground, a definitely formed crown of foliage, and a mature height of at least 13 feet (Kuhns, 2022).

Trees are a valuable resource. They contribute to the quality and character of Surrey Heath's unique environment, and to improving air quality, climate amelioration, conserving water, preserving soil, and supporting wildlife. An estimated 36.1% of Surrey Heath is forested. For these reasons and for their intrinsic value, the Council places great weight on the retention of existing trees wherever possible.

The Tree Strategy and Action Plan are supported by the Climate Change Working Group.

2. Our Vision

This Strategy describes how Surrey Heath Borough Council will approach the management of trees and woodland. It is important that the benefits of trees, hedgerows and woodland are considered in relation to the need for development and, that existing trees are safeguarded and opportunities are taken to increase provision.



Proper planning and maintenance creates healthy and robust woodland which is better able to thrive in our changing climate, provide important habitats, and deliver the multitude of benefits we all appreciate. Actions 1 and 2 of the Action plan directly relate to increasing tree planting within the Borough and actions 4 and 5 aim to improve tree maintenance (see pages 14-15).

The aim of this Strategy is to reinforce the Council's role as a responsible tree owner and to encourage residents and partners to be responsible tree owners. It promotes the planting of trees in new developments, provides direction for the increase of canopy cover, and highlights the environmental importance of trees.

3. Background

On the 9 of October 2019, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030 across its own estate and operations, including contractors used, and support the actions being taken by Surrey County Council in this area.

To this end, Surrey Heath Borough Council has developed a [Climate Change Action Plan](#) with two key aims:

- 1 To work towards achieving the ambitious net-zero carbon emission target by 2030 as an organisation and contribute to making the Borough net zero by 2050 (with the aspiration for net zero by 2030).
- 2 To ensure that the Council as an organisation is resilient to the impacts of climate change and support the resilience of the Borough to the impacts of climate change.



Part of the Climate Change Action plan is to undertake a tree density assessment of the Borough, giving a clear understanding of tree cover in the borough (ET3), as well as working with partners to facilitate a tree planting and green infrastructure strategy (specific to climate change), taking account of the Borough's biodiversity assets (ET10). Action 9 of the Tree Strategy Action Plan supports the aim of understanding how many trees are in the borough (see page 16).

Surrey Heath is fortunate to have large areas of high quality green space, countryside and internationally important habitats. The challenges facing our planet should not be underestimated and caring for it has never been so important. We are committed to showing leadership, working with partners, businesses and residents to undertake local action on the environment. In doing so we will work to protect and enhance our natural environment for future generations.

4. Trees in Surrey

4.1. Trees in Surrey Heath

Surrey is the most wooded county in England with 30.9% of the land covered by trees (Shaw, 2021) and Surrey Heath has estimated 36.1% of tree cover which is the highest of any local authority in the UK (Horton, 2023).

Trees are a defining characteristic of Surrey Heath; they provide important local landmarks, transform roads into green corridors and make a valuable contribution to the character and quality of urban environments. They complement the built environment by providing screening, perspective, privacy and seclusion and define open spaces. The three most common trees in Surrey Heath are Scots Pine, Silver Birch, and English Oak.



4.2. Surrey County Council

Surrey Heath is committed to supporting Surrey County Council to meet their goals regarding Climate Change and Tree Planting. Surrey County Council's Tree Strategy can be found [here](#).

As part of Surrey County Council's ambition to be a carbon neutral county by 2050, the [Climate Change Strategy](#) sets out a target to facilitate the planting of 1.2 million new trees (one for every resident) by 2030. This ambition is not something that the County Council can deliver alone. Therefore, their New Tree Strategy is for the whole of Surrey, including residents, businesses, the public sector and both borough and district authorities, with the County Council taking a coordinating role. Surrey Heath's Tree Strategy contributes to the delivery of County's Strategy.

4.3. Planning Control and Planning Policy in Relation to Trees

The National Planning Policy Framework states that planning policies should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate existing tree elsewhere in developments (such as parks, community orchards, and open areas within the sit) that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees for at least five years post planting, and that existing trees are retained wherever as a priority. Applicants should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.

This Strategy will feed into the Surrey Heath Borough Council local plan. Actions 6, 7 and 8 of the Action Plan relate to planning policy and the future Local plan (see



pages 15-16). When developed, the future Local Plan will include a detailed policy on trees, as well as wider climate change policies.

5. The Importance of Trees

5.1. The Value of Trees and Woodland

Trees and hedgerows provide a valuable resource in terms of biodiversity, amenity and for climate change adaption and mitigation, providing habitats for a range of wildlife, and forming a “carbon sink”. They reduce the risks of flooding and can help to reduce the Urban Heat Island effect where urban areas experience higher temperatures than non-urban areas. The woodland trust states that ‘if the UK is to reach its carbon neutral target by 2050 there needs to be an ‘increase in woodland cover from 13% to 19%’ (Woodland Trust, 2022). Find more on the values of trees on the [Woodland Trust](#) and [Royal Parks](#) websites.

Action 3 of the Action Plan supports promoting the educational benefits of trees to people in the community (see page 15).

Climate Change Adaptation

- Trees, hedgerows, and other vegetation are key in capturing and storing carbon dioxide (CO₂) which is the most prevalent greenhouse gas in the United Kingdom. Woodland is the most effective habitat for CO₂ sequestration, as emissions are sequestered within the soil as well as the trees. A tree will absorb anywhere between 10 and 40kg of CO₂ per year on average (EcoTree, 2022).
- Trees provide areas of shade in built-up urban areas as well as providing a source of natural flood risk management.



- Trees reduce wind speeds and cool the air as they lose moisture and reflect heat upwards from their leaves. It's estimated that trees can reduce the temperature in a city by up to 7°C (The Royal Parks, 2022).

Air Quality

- Trees and vegetation can have a positive impact on air quality in urban areas. Trees can remove small amounts of particulate matter (PM) pollutants from the air through deposition to the surface of the leaves. In Surrey, it is estimated that the equivalent of 471 deaths per year can be attributed to long-term exposure to particulates (Surrey County Council, 2020).

Health and Wellbeing

- Trees and green spaces are well-known to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing.
- Green spaces provide an area for physical activities, leisure and, play.
- Trees have been linked to improvements in stress, anxiety, and mental health. Research shows that within minutes of being surrounded by trees and green space, your blood pressure drops, your heart rate slows, and your stress levels come down (The Royal Parks, 2022).

Education

- Woodland areas provide a space for accessible education in a natural environment.

Economy

- Green infrastructure supports local economic growth through the attraction of visitor spending, environmental cost savings, health improvement, market spend and employment generation.



- Tourism to rural and wooded areas makes a significant contribution to Surrey's economy.
- Research shows that average house prices are 5-18% higher when properties are close to mature trees (Surrey County Council, 2020).

Biodiversity

- Increasing tree cover creates biodiversity benefits and increased habitats, provided that the right trees are planted in the right places.
- Trees and hedgerows host complex microhabitats. They offer habitation and food to birds, insects, lichen and fungi.

5.2. Challenges for Trees

Oak Processionary Moths (OPM)

- [Oak processionary moths \(OPM\)](#) are a species whose caterpillars cause significant damage to oak trees by consuming their foliage, and can cause irritation to anyone who comes into direct contact.

Ash Dieback

- [Ash dieback](#) is a highly destructive disease of ash trees (*Fraxinus* species), especially the United Kingdom's native ash species, common ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). It is caused by a fungus named *Hymenoscyphusfraxineus*.

Summer Branch Drop

- Summer branch drop syndrome is an issue that typically occurs during the summer and affects completely healthy trees. It is when trees suddenly lose their branches during the warmer months of the year. It is most likely linked to water availability and heat stress.



- Any tree can be affected by sudden branch drop syndrome, however there are certain types that are more likely to experience this issue such as oak, beech, elm, eucalyptus, and sycamore trees.

Development

- The clearing of trees for development such as agriculture, farming, residential and commercial development, and logging is the biggest threat to trees worldwide.

Hot weather and Drought

- During prolonged droughts and extreme heat waves native trees that are accustomed to the local climate can start to develop symptoms of heat stress.
- Drought disrupts the water transport within trees by reducing the amount of water available for the tree. If a tree can't get water to its leaves, it will die.

5.3. The Future of Trees

As the climate warms, trees and woodlands are on the first line of the crisis. They are at greater risk of droughts, wildfires, and invasive species.

If trees are not protected and deforestation increases, it will adversely affect ecosystems, local weather patterns, pollution, and climate. Some consequences of deforestation are:

- Trees have a large impact on the water cycle; they absorb water from the ground and release it into the atmosphere, which form clouds and deposit the water back to Earth in the form of rain. Fewer trees mean less life-sustaining water everywhere.
- Deforestation destroys habitats for native species which would lead to the extinction of many groups of organisms.



- Without trees, formerly forested areas would become drier and more prone to extreme droughts. Drier land can increase the chances of rain causing extreme flooding.

6. Our Responsibilities

6.1. Legal Obligations

As a land owner, we have a duty for the care and management of council-owned trees within the Borough to ensure they remain safe as reasonably practicable. When assessing requests for pruning or removal of council-owned trees, we will only consider tree work where our inspection has identified that there is an elevated risk to persons or property.

In the case of protected, council-owned trees, we will consider pruning in line with “common law rights” in the same way as any protected tree. A Tree Preservation Order application or a Section 211 notification must be made. We will however not allow excessive pruning to Council trees for reasons shown in 6.4 of this document.

6.2. Protecting Our Trees

Trees and woodlands may be protected under The Town and Country Planning Act (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012 via a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

The management of TPOs is administered by Surrey Heath Borough Council in its role as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and TPO’s are made to protect trees or woodlands that provide significant amenity benefit to the area.



Trees within a Conservation Area are protected under Section 211 of Town and County Planning Act. Any contravention of a TPO or the Conservation area is an offence, the legislation requires the Local Planning Authority's written permission to be obtained prior to pruning, felling or undertaking work that disturbs the tree or its root system. Offences for contravention of a TPO are set out under Section 210 of the Town and Country Planning Act to include where work is done to a protected tree, either wilfully or recklessly without the LPA's permission.

The penalty for contravention could be a criminal conviction and a fine, for which the benefit accrued could be a determining factor.

Before any work is undertaken, you should check the tree is not subject to:

- Tree Preservation Order (TPO)
- In a Conservation Area (6 weeks' notice required for trees with a stem over 75mm in diameter measured at 1.5m above ground level)
- Subject to a restrictive Planning Condition

Find out more about [Tree Information and Preservation Orders](#).

6.3. Planting Trees in the Right Place

The Council commits to choosing the right place for new trees to be planted. We will carefully consider the most effective places for the greatest environmental benefits and to help combat climate change.



6.4. Tree Pruning

If the tree is subject to a TPO, in a conservation area or subject of a restrictive planning condition you will need to follow Council procedure to obtain the consent of the Council to prune any part of the tree. Please see [frequently asked questions here](#).

The Council will not approve the excessive pruning or removal of a protected tree in the following situations:

- To prevent or reduce bird droppings or the use by mammals such as squirrels.
- To mitigate or reduce the nuisance of tree sap (honeydew), falling leaves, seeds or fruits from either the homeowners or third party land.
- To improve natural light in a property or garden.
- Because a tree is considered to be 'too big' or 'too tall'.
- To prevent interference with TV and satellite reception or solar panels.
- To remove or reduce interference with telephone or electrical wires.
- To alleviate the nuisance of overhanging branches where such works would leave the tree unbalanced.
- Because a tree is perceived as causing or exacerbating a personal medical condition.
- Due to drainage or utility service issues.
- Due to disruption of drives, paths, shed bases etc.

If any type of bird is nesting in a tree or hedge then it is [legally protected](#), so long as the nest is in use. This may prohibit certain types of tree pruning or removal until the nesting season is over. The bird nesting season according to Natural England begins on March 1st and runs through to July 31st. This is a guideline and it can be



assumed that birds will nest both before and after this time period. Penalties that can be imposed for criminal offences in respect of a single bird, nest or egg contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is an unlimited fine, up to six months imprisonment or both.

Find more [Tree Advice and Guidance](#) for landowners, homeowners, arboricultural contractors and consultants.

We recommend people look at the [Arboricultural Association](#) when looking for a contractor and general tree information

7. Implementation of the Strategy

7.1. Action Plan

	Objective	Action	Target	Responsibility
1	Increase opportunities for fruit foraging in the Borough.	Establishing community native fruit hedgerows and/or orchard initiatives in every SANG.	Minimum of one SANG every year	Green Space Officer (SANGS)
2	Report on tree planting	Report on numbers of trees planted	4,000 trees per year for 2023/24 with a review for 2024/25 to establish ongoing	Green Space team



	Objective	Action	Target	Responsibility
			planting aspirations	
3	Deliver educational training for all ages on the benefits of trees	Working independently or with others (e.g. the Museum), deliver educational workshops.	4 per year	Green Space team
4	Support the volunteer groups to help maintain tree stock	Promote the work of volunteers and help them to apply for grants.	Have 6 joint projects working with volunteers throughout the year	Green Space team
5	Commit to having the appropriate infrastructure to maintain tree stock	Annual audit of tree stock and equipment	Update GIS accordingly and maintain levels of equipment	Green Space team
6	Use the planning system to enhance tree planting in the Borough	Ensure that Planning Policy facilitates this through the new Local Plan.	Adopt new Local Plan with tree policy in line with the Local Development Scheme	Planning Services



	Objective	Action	Target	Responsibility
7	Use the planning system to protect trees in the Borough	Ensure that Planning Policy facilitates this through the new Local Plan.	Adopt new Local Plan with tree policy in line with the Local Development Scheme	Planning services
8	Planting of trees to provide shade, flood management, and cooling.	Consider tree sponsorship scheme for residents in open spaces	Adopt new Local Plan with tree policy in line with the Local Development Scheme	Planning Services
9	Have a clear understanding of how many trees are in the borough	In line with Climate Action Plan, assess the feasibility of a tree density assessment of the borough	Feasibility study produced	Green Space team

7.2. Governance and Next Steps

The action plan updates will be presented to the Climate Change Working Groups throughout the year. The annual actions will be reviewed under the Climate Change Action Plan.

The strategy will be reviewed annually taking into consideration the emerging climate change directives and current legislation and guidance.



8. Useful Links

[SHBC Tree Advice and Guidance](#)

[Surrey County Council Tree Strategy](#)

[The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024](#)

9. References

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Surrey Heath Borough Council
Executive
18th April 2023

Property Acquisition and Disposal Strategy

Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Shaun Garrett, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Transformation
Strategic Director/Head of Service	Martin Breeden, Head of Investment and Development
Report Author:	Martin Breeden, Head of Investment and Development
Key Decision:	Yes
Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report	24 th March 2023
Wards Affected:	All

Summary and purpose

This document sets out Surrey Heath Borough Council's ('SHBC') strategy for the acquisition and disposal of property for the purposes of economic development, regeneration, protection of local employment opportunities and the sustainability of town centres within the Borough of Surrey Heath.

The strategy accords with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the wider goals of the Council's Five Year Strategy and will assist in the aim of achieving financial stability to deliver high quality services to the residents and businesses of the Borough.

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the Property Acquisition and Disposal Strategy, as attached at Annex A to this report, be approved.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 The Property Acquisition and Disposal Strategy is appended hereto.
- 1.2 Please refer to section 2 of the document for the policy and statutory background.

2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 It is important that potential acquisitions and disposals are delivered in line with a well-defined but flexible strategy.
- 2.2 This updated strategy is being brought forward now as it accords with the latest guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy ('CIPFA') and so that any immediately proposed acquisitions or disposals are executed in accordance with an up to date strategy.

3. Proposal and Alternative Options

The council may decide to:

- 3.1 Approve the new strategy.
- 3.2 Not approve the strategy and continue with acquisitions and disposals within the framework of the previous strategy which was approved in 2011 and which does not accord with the latest CIPFA guidance.
- 3.3 Not approve the strategy and not proceed with any acquisitions and disposals

4. Contribution to the Council's Five Year Strategy

- 4.1 Please refer to section 3 of the strategy

5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 None

6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

- 6.1 The S151 Officer's comments have been incorporated into the strategy.

7. Legal and Governance Issues

- 7.1 Please refer to section 8 of the strategy regarding governance of the execution of the strategy.

8. Monitoring Officer Comments:

- 8.1 The Monitoring Officer's comments have been incorporated into the strategy.

9. Other Considerations and Impacts

None

Environment and Climate Change

- 9.1 The design and execution of the strategy should accord with, and add benefit to, the existing climate change work outlined within the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

Equalities and Human Rights

- 9.2 The strategy is capable of supporting all parts of the Surrey Heath economy and community.

Risk Management

- 9.3 A structured approach to acquisitions and disposals will reduce the level of risk to the authority.

Community Engagement

- 9.4 The strategy aligns with the Council Plan objectives and therefore benefits from the significant consultation that was undertaken in 2021. Specifically, in supporting businesses and attracting inward investment.

Annexes

Strategy for the acquisition and disposal of non-operational property.

Background Papers

None

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PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL STRATEGY

March 2023

Surrey Heath Borough Council
Knoll Road, Camberley GU15 3HD



I. Purpose of this document

This report sets out Surrey Heath Borough Council's ('SHBC') strategy for the acquisition and disposal of property for the purposes of economic development, regeneration, protection of local employment opportunities and the sustainability of town centres within the Borough of Surrey Heath.

The strategy accords with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the wider goals of the Council's Five Year Strategy and will assist in the aim of achieving financial stability to deliver high quality services to the residents and businesses of the Borough.



2. Policy and statutory background

Acquisitions may be financed through prudential borrowing within the parameters laid out in the CIPFA Prudential Code and following the revised guidance from HM Treasury regarding commercial property acquisitions by local authorities.

Guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy ('CIPFA') supports the s.151 officer and other Council officers in how property portfolios should be built by Local Authorities.

This guidance allows for Councils to acquire and dispose of property to support their regeneration and economic development aims and should always be in the interests of their residents and businesses. This means that any acquisitions should be within the Borough boundaries. In extremely rare and very exceptional circumstances, acquisitions within the immediate vicinity of the borough boundaries could be made, but they would have to be supported with a strong rationale of the benefit to residents and businesses within the borough.

Acquisitions may be financed through prudential borrowing within the parameters laid out in the CIPFA Prudential Code and following revised guidance from HM Treasury regarding commercial property acquisitions by local authorities.



3. Regeneration and economic development aims of SHBC

SHBC's Five year strategy approved on 27th October 2021, is based around the four key priorities shown in the diagram below



The acquisition and development strategy will contribute to these priority areas in the following manner:



Environment

- Carefully considering the environmental impact of new acquisitions and development activities.
- Bringing forward sites within the council's portfolio for housing delivery.
- Considering the acquisition of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace ('SANG') sites.

Economy

- Acquiring assets where the council can maximise their economic benefit to business and residents.
- Considering divesting of assets where private sector ownership may better serve the interests of residents and the community, for instance, where the buyer is a specialist operator or is more likely to be able to deliver the desired regeneration of those assets.
- Considering divesting of assets when the council's capital can be recycled into new assets which better serve the delivery of the priorities within the five year strategy.
- Considering acquiring assets which preserve certain key employment uses within the borough.
- Considering acquiring assets which can foster new businesses such as pop up shops or 'garage to industrial unit' start ups.



- Identifying sites across the Borough for the Council to acquire in order to deliver regeneration and community facilities.

Effective and Responsive Council

- Acquiring and disposing of property wisely after consideration of the key relevant factors including all foreseeable costs and the prospect of attracting further resources and investment into the borough.
- Acquiring and disposing of properties that on a portfolio wide basis contribute to the sustainability of SHBC's finances.
- Adopting an agile approach within the bounds of the strategy in order to react to market opportunities and trends.

Health and Quality of Life

- Considering acquisition of properties which facilitate the growth of activities that promote health and quality of life.
- Considering the provision of accessible transport as part of acquisition and disposal activities.
- Considering the acquisition of residential properties under the Local Authority Housing Scheme or similar schemes where funds are provided to SHBC
- Considering the acquisition of sites suitable for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.



- Undertaking careful analysis of health and safety issues as part of the acquisition process.

4. Key objectives of the strategy

- To acquire and dispose of property for regeneration purposes or economic development in accordance with CIPFA guidance.
- To build a balanced property portfolio to minimise risk of overexposure to single sectors of the market.
- To achieve an even balance of risk and return through portfolio diversification.
- To identify and appropriately manage risks through the acquisition and disposal process.
- To acquire a suitable grade of properties which possess the characteristics required to retain liquidity and preserve capital (notwithstanding market movement) over the period of ownership.



5. Core principles of the strategy

- Acquisitions are to be made only in direct real estate (i.e. not into equities or debt instruments).
- Properties are to be located within Surrey Heath.
- Properties are to be held freehold or long leasehold where a peppercorn (or very low) ground rent is payable.
- No speculative development.

Acquisitions in areas classed as being within flood zone 3 or with a high land contamination risk would need an exceptional justification.

One of the most important underlying principles is that the strategy and the portfolio should be able to flex in the required way to react to market conditions, whilst maintaining governance for sound decision making and transaction execution.



To achieve the objectives of the strategy, over the medium term, a balanced property portfolio will be created, appropriately managing risk by portfolio profiling and asset diversification.

Portfolio profiling consists of analysing the existing portfolio, including by type and value of each property to assess exposure to different categories of property.

Asset diversification is required to limit risk arising from factors such as location performance, single asset risk or the risk of exposure to a particular occupier or type of occupier.

Portfolio profiling will be undertaken as part of the council's annual plan process.

6. Acquisition and disposal criteria

The acquisition and disposal criteria will change according to the specific needs of the portfolio and the economic and regeneration needs of Surrey Heath at any given time. From a strategic point of view and at the outset of building property portfolios it is generally considered to be most advantageous to have criteria as wide as possible to identify the most suitable properties. This is particularly true in strong market conditions when demand for good quality, income producing assets is very high.



7. Portfolio valuation

The non-operational property portfolio is externally valued every year in accordance with the RICS Red Book and the International Valuation Standards.

Annual valuations are important not only for regulatory purposes but also to enable individual assets and the portfolio to be benchmarked against the wider performance of the commercial property sector. The estimated rental values within the valuations set the target rents for business planning.

The leisure and community properties are typically valued on a rolling programme of five yearly valuations, typically on a depreciated replacement cost basis with the exception of car parks which are valued based on the net profit that they produce.

8. Acquisition and disposal process

All acquisition and disposals of property will follow the rules and procedures of the Council's constitution and scheme of delegation and be compliant with procurement rules and other relevant regulations.



The acquisition process will typically proceed as follows:

- Potential properties to be acquired are introduced directly by vendors, vendors' agents or by property agents seeking to act for Surrey Heath Borough Council.
- An initial review of the acquisition opportunity will be undertaken by the officer team led by the Head of Investment and Development to see whether the potential acquisitions meet the prevailing investment criteria. At this stage a decision is made to either reject the property or to instruct the agent to provide their initial advice. The opportunity will then be shared with the Property Investment Working Group ('PIWG') to gather its views using the Acquisition Evaluation Form at Appendix I.
- Following consultation with the PIWG, the Head of Investment and Development may submit a non-binding offer.
- If the Council's bid or offer is accepted, the transaction will be submitted to executive or full council as appropriate depending on the budget and level of cost involved.
- For relatively straightforward transactions, the recommendation may suggest that exchange and completion of contracts is delegated to the head of Investment and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for property acquisitions and disposals and the approval of the Monitoring Officer.
- For more complex or higher value properties, the recommendation will be brought back to executive following the completion of due diligence work, to seek approval to exchange contracts.



- An RICS Red Book valuation will be submitted to Executive or Full Council as appropriate with the recommendation prior to completion.
- For the due diligence work, external solicitors will be appointed by the Council's Monitoring Officer or the Head of Investment with the approval of the Monitoring officer.
- Further expenditure will be required prior to exchanging contracts on environmental, physical condition and measured surveys.

The disposal process will typically proceed as follows:

- Any potential community and leisure properties which have become surplus to requirements will be identified by the relevant officers and Portfolio Holder.
- All potential disposals will be identified as part of the annual business planning process following consultation with the Property Investment Working Group
- A selling agent will usually be appointed to act for SHBC following council procurement rules.
- A sales brochure will usually be prepared with key information which will require some up front expenditure on compiling key legal and building condition information.



- Similarly to acquisitions, the agent's fee is usually only payable in the event of a sale, however should the process not reach a conclusion there will be abortive legal costs.
- Should the Portfolio Holder for property acquisitions and disposals consider that it is in SHBC's best interests to accept any of the offers received following a reasonable period for marketing, then a recommendation will be produced to the executive or full council.
- Any proposed sale below the prevailing RICS Red Book valuation would need a clear justification.





Appendix I



Acquisition Evaluation Form			
Ref:		Date:	
Known as:			
Address			
Lead Officer			
Agent/Source		Agent Fees	1%
Tenure	Freehold	Area Sq Ft (M ²)	Building:
Portfolio	Select from list		Land:
Location			
Sector	Office (multi-occupier)	Reason for purchase	
Financial Information			
Asking Price		Purchaser's Costs @6.5% <i>Revenue risk if acquisition does not complete</i>	£ -
Gross Annual Rental Income <i>(Potential Rent if fully let)</i>		Gross Yield <i>(based on asking price)</i>	0.00%
Annual Revenue Cost of Borrowing <i>(Annuity method @ x%)</i>	£ -	Additional Income	
		Annual Revenue Costs <i>(eg management)</i>	
Surplus after Interest & Minimum Revenue Provision	£ -	Yield after Interest & Minimum Revenue Provision	0.00%
Due Dilligence			
Background			
Tenants/ Covenant Strength/Lease Term/Breaks			
Incentives <i>(rent-free etc.)</i>			
Condition/ Delapidations			
Planning History <i>(i.e. approved development, use and any enforcement)</i>			
Current Planning Status			
Restrictive Covenants			
Income Profile			
Risk			
Additional Due Diligence required			
Strategic Objectives			
Next Steps <i>(with costs and resource implications)</i>			
Comments			
Recommendation (instructions on way forward)			
Priority Score <i>(1=High, 3=Low)</i>			





Exclusion of Press And Public

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that, under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
8	3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).
9	3 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

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