

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Performance
and Finance Scrutiny Committee held at
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House,
Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on 25
January 2023**

+ Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam (Chairman)
+ Cllr Valerie White (Vice Chairman)

- Cllr Graham Alleway	+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram
+ Cllr Stuart Black	- Cllr Morgan Rise
- Cllr Vivienne Chapman	+ Cllr Graham Tapper
+ Cllr Paul Deach	+ Cllr Pat Tedder
+ Cllr Sharon Galliford	+ Cllr Victoria Wheeler
+ Cllr Edward Hawkins	+ Cllr Helen Whitcroft
+ Cllr Liz Noble	

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Graham Tapper for Cllr Morgan Rise
Cllr Pat Tedder for Cllr Graham Alleway

Portfolio Holders in Attendance: Cllr Sarah-Jane Croke, Portfolio Holder: Safeguarding & Support
Cllr Colin Dougan, Portfolio Holder: Environment & Heath
Cllr Adrian Page, Portfolio Holder: Planning & Control
Cllr Robin Perry Portfolio Holder: Finance

Non Committee Members in Attendance: Cllrs Rodney Bates and Cliff Betton

Officers Present: Sarah Bainbridge, Organisational Development Manager
Martin Breeden, Head of Investment and Development
Jo Chauhan, Joint Waste Solutions
Gavin Chinniah, Head of Planning
Cameron Dent, Climate Change Officer
Julia Greenfield, Corporate Enforcement Manager
Sally Kipping, Head of HR, Performance & Communications
Nick Steevens, Strategic Director: Environment and Community
Gavin Ramtohal, Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Bob Watson, Strategic Director: Finance & Customer Services
Damian Roberts, Chief Executive
James Robinson, Senior Environmental Health Officer
Frances Soper, Environmental Health & Licensing Manager
Ann Zhang, Scientific Officer

34/PF Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 9th November 2022, 24th November 2022 and 5th January 2023 be approved as being correct records and signed by the Chairman.

35/PF Executive Portfolio Update: Environment & Health

The Committee considered a report summarising the Council's work over the past twelve months which were encompassed by the Environment and Health Executive Portfolio; a portfolio which covered climate change, corporate enforcement, emergency planning and business continuity, Environmental Health, air quality, health and wellbeing and recycling and waste.

Key areas of work over the past twelve months had included: the development of a detailed energy strategy to support the Council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030, the redeployment of the Environmental Health Team from their routine day to day work to deal with an outbreak of food poisoning which cumulated in the serving of a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notice and subsequent action in the Magistrates Court, leading on the Surrey Health Health Alliance project to tackle obesity, the restoration of the garden waste collection service following a period of disruption due to shortages of HGV drivers, the development of targeted intervention to improve the quality of materials put out for recycling, the expansion of the food waste collection service to 2,700 properties in the Borough which had not previously been able to access the service and work to review and map litter bins and improve reporting processes for full or damaged bins.

The work of officers at both Amey and Joint Waste Solutions to bring the recent period of industrial action to a satisfactory conclusion was commended. The Committee was informed that behaviour on picket lines had been exemplary and where police had had to make arrests these had been of union officials and not Amey employees.

It was acknowledged that there was still work to do in respect of improving the emptying and maintenance of dog fouling bins. In order to make it easier to report problems to the appropriate organisation, work was underway to map all waste bins in the Borough and during the coming months QR Codes would be added to bins to enable problems to be reported even more easily. A suggestion that What Three Words might be used to register the locations of bins that required attention was noted however its use would be dependent on whether it could be integrated into Amey's software. It was stressed that dog waste could now be disposed of in normal street litter bins and over time the standalone dog waste bins would be replaced with normal litter bins.

The Corporate Enforcement Team were making use of deployable CCTV cameras in known flytipping hotspots. To date, no incidences of flytipping had been recorded in those areas monitored. It was noted that the regulations surrounding the use of CCTV cameras obliged the Council to display signs informing people of the presence of cameras and it was thought that this could be acting as a deterrent.

It was confirmed that detailed costed business plans would be produced in respect of projects to improve the energy efficiency of Council owned buildings before any decisions were made as to which projects were to be prioritised and funded.

The Committee commended the Healthy Wellbeing Events being hosted in Camberley and it was requested that similar events be rolled out in the villages, possibly through the Warm Hub Initiative.

The Committee was informed that there would be opportunities for improvements to be made to the Borough's cycling and walking infrastructure through Surrey County Council's plans for the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for each of Surrey's Districts and boroughs.

The Committee noted the update.

36/PF Air Quality Annual Review 2022

The Committee considered a report summarising a review of air quality across the Borough during 2021.

The annual Air Quality Review formed part of the Council's statutory requirements in relation to Local Air Quality Management under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995. The report set out the results of air quality monitoring work, detailed the activities and strategies employed by the Council to improve air quality and reviewed the progress made in this area. The Air Quality Annual Status Report would be submitted to DEFRA as part of the Council's local air quality management responsibilities. Due to the length of time that it took laboratories to analyse the results from monitoring stations the data for pollution levels in 2022 would be submitted to DEFRA in June, although some provisional data would be available earlier.

It was reported that during 2021 the Council had used passive diffusion tube monitors to monitor NO₂ at 51 locations across the Borough and monitoring of both NO₂ and PM10 was carried out through a continuous monitoring station at Castle Road adjacent to the M3. Analysis of air quality monitoring results over the past eight years showed that NO₂ concentrations were below 40µg/m³ at all 51 diffusion tube monitoring locations.

In respect of the Castle Road monitoring site, the mean NO₂ concentration during 2021 was 30µg/m³ and there had been no occasions when the hourly mean NO₂ exceeded the objective value of 200µg/m³. Monitoring of PM10 during 2021 had found that levels were, at 14µg/m³, well within the 40µg/m³ air quality objective. Analysis of daily exceedance results had shown that short term PM10 concentrations were also well below the objective of no more than 35 daily incidences of levels above 50µg/m³ in any one year.

Analysis of data from monitoring equipment in the vicinity of the temporary 50mph speed limit on the A331 between the Farnborough Road and the Coleford Bridge Road junctions showed that there had been a small reduction, 1µg/m³, in NO₂ along the road following the imposition of the temporary speed reduction taking levels below the 40µg/m³ target limit. Publication of DEFRA's final report on the impact of the changed speed limits on pollution levels and next steps had been delayed from its original date of June 2022 and updates would be provided as they occurred.

It was confirmed that there were a number of monitoring stations in the vicinity of Frimley Park Hospital including at the hospital's entrance, on Portsmouth Road and adjacent to the M3. At the current time, there was no evidence to suggest that pollution exceeded approved limits. It was agreed that this data would be circulated.

It was considered that the imposition of 20mph speed limits in built up areas would have a limited impact. Furthermore, the Borough was already measuring pollution levels that were below Government targets and consequently it was unlikely that reducing speed limits on pollution grounds would be possible.

It was agreed that a map showing the locations of all monitoring stations would be circulated.

The Group noted the report.

37/PF Draft Annual Plan 2023/24

The Committee considered a report setting out the Council's draft Annual Plan for 2023/24. The draft Annual Plan set out the key goals, projects and performance targets for the Council during the 2023/24 financial year to deliver the goals and ambitions set out in the Council's new Five Year Strategy 2022-2027. A final draft would be presented to the Executive for approval in February 2023. Arising from the Committee's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- It was questioned why Bentley Copse Playground had not been included in ENV01 as the funding and plans were all in place. It was agreed this would be followed up.
- Target ECON13 to promote Fairtrade throughout the Borough was considered to be too vague in view of the original motion that was agreed by Council.
- It was stressed that care needed to be taken to ensure that the strategic objectives were supported by the Council's policies for example GreenSpaces had a clear objective to relating to the planting of hedgerows however this was not explicit in Planning Policy documents.

It was queried whether there should be a move away from targets which were dependent on meeting a single data point and instead a focus on always ensuring improvement. Following discussion it was acknowledged that whilst the focus should always be on improvement, which could mean maintaining performance as circumstances became more challenging, that specific targets were important to allow the Committee and Council to measure and scrutinise performance.

The Committee noted the report.

38/PF Corporate Risk

The Committee received a report setting out the Council's key corporate risks and the actions being taken to mitigate their potential impact.

It was noted that the implementation of a Government requirement for voters to provide photographic identification in order to be able to vote at polling stations from May 2023 onwards had been added to the Risk Register on a temporary basis. It was stressed that the Elections Team was working closely with the Communications Team to develop a robust communications strategy to raise awareness of the changes amongst the Borough's residents and this work would be rolled out in the coming months with amongst other activities leaflets in Council Tax bills, prominent articles in Heathscene, a social media campaign and posters. It was suggested that a footer advising residents of the changes be added to all Council emails in the run up to the elections in May.

The Committee noted the report.

39/PF Budget Setting 2023/24 Update

The Committee considered a report setting out the Council's draft budget for the 2023/24 financial year.

It was reported that the Council continued to face significant inflationary pressures and consequently whilst the Revenue Budget required in 2023/24 would be £17.468million, it was expected that the normal funding streams would only bring in £13.66million leaving a budget gap of approximately £4million and necessitating a drawdown on the Council's reserves.

It was recognised that it would not be possible to continue using Council Reserves to bridge the budget gap in the long term and through the use of a Star Chamber zero based budgeting exercise, it had been possible to identify £647,500 of efficiencies in the 2022/23 budget and £482,500 of efficiencies had been identified in 2023/24 budgets. This process would be repeated in 2023/24 with a view to finding a further £500,000 of efficiency savings.

It was acknowledged that this process would be difficult however a number of efficiency savings had been identified previously which had not been taken forward and these would be reviewed as part of the 2023/24 Star Chamber process.

The Committee noted the report.

40/PF Public Realm Task and Finish Group Final Report

The Committee considered a report setting out the outcomes of a review of the public realm works in Camberley Town Centre that had been completed by a Task and Finish Group established by the Committee.

It was clarified that the recommendations did not make reference to putting processes in place for the approval of funding for large projects because these were already contained within the Council's Constitution and Financial Regulations. The issue had been that these had not been properly followed at the time the decisions had been made.

It was stressed that the review had found no evidence of untoward actions by officers and that decisions had been made in good faith. Notwithstanding this there had been evidence to support the view that too few officers had been trying to complete too large a project without appropriate levels of support.

The Committee expressed disappointment over the length of time that the review had taken to complete and stressed that future reviews should be carried out in a more timely manner.

RESOLVED that:

- i. The findings and recommendations of the Strategic Director: Finance and Customer Services (Chief Finance Officer) are noted.
- ii. The recommendations set out at section 3 of the report are commended to the Council's Executive for adoption by officers when managing significant contracts.

41/PF Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered its proposed work programme for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year.

It was agreed that the Environment and Health Executive Portfolio update would be scheduled for consideration in six months time rather than twelve months.

The Committee noted the work programme.

42/PF Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee would take place on Wednesday 15th March 2023 at 7pm.

Chairman