

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive
held on 5 December 2023**

+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald (Chair)

+ Cllr Alan Ashbery	+ Cllr Morgan Rise
+ Cllr Kel Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr John Skipper
+ Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke	- Cllr Helen Whitcroft
+ Cllr Leanne MacIntyre	

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

In Attendance: Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Shaun Garrett, Cllr Julie Hoad, Cllr Sarbie Kang, Cllr Rob Lee, Cllr Lewis Mears, Cllr Liz Noble, Cllr Jonathan Quin, Cllr Josh Thorne, Cllr Victoria Wheeler, Cllr David Whitcroft, Cllr Valerie White and Cllr Richard Wilson

55/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

56/E Public Question Time

No questions were received from members of the public.

57/E Questions by Members

In response to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson, Members were updated on the situation of the closed M3 footbridge that linked Bagshot and Lightwater.

The Leader responded to a question from Councillor Shaun Garrett regarding proposals to spend funding on a litter bin replacement programme rather than revenue grants, indicating that this was due to the prioritisation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for longer term impact projects.

Following a question from Cllr Victoria Wheeler, the Leader undertook to provide a written response concerning the decision not to support a Civic Service that year, noting that he had previously responded about this matter. He also received a question regarding a decision in the previous council term by the Liberal Democrat group not to join a coalition to form an administration.

Responding to a question from Councillor Julie Hoad, the Leader updated the meeting on the budget preparation and pressures being seen.

Following a question from Councillor Josh Thorne, the Performance & Finance Portfolio Holder indicated her support for the statement made by the leader of her group on the Council's finances.

In response to a question from Councillor Rob Lee, concerning a reference on Social Media to the Council having £42m 'in the cupboard' the Leader asked the Section 151 Officer to provide a written response with an accurate position on the Council's reserves.

58/E Calculation and setting of the Council Tax Base for 2024/25

The Executive received a report on the setting of the Council Tax Base for 2024/25, which included detailed breakdowns of the calculations of the Tax Base for each part of the borough and a breakdown of the calculation of the Tax Base for the whole area. Members noted that there had been an increase in the Tax Base of 136.1 Band D equivalent properties.

Technical changes to Council Tax introduced from April 2013 meant that the Council was empowered to set a number of changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions, as well as introduce a premium for long term empty properties. It was proposed to amend the current premiums to result in a 100% charge on full amount of rates payable after one year of a property being empty; the premium of 200% where the property had been empty for 5 years and a premium of 300%, where the property had been empty for 10 years or more would remain the same.

The Executive was informed that it was proposed to amend the Local Council Tax Support Scheme to disregard 100% of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions in the calculation of income. This supported the Armed Forces Covenant support commitment the Council has given recently. The change would come into effect from 1 April 2023. No changes were proposed to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for working age claimants.

It was advised that a reduction to the Council Tax Hardship Fund was proposed, which was based on current expenditure and demand.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the calculations of the tax base in Annexes A to F summarised below be noted:**

			Band D Equivalent Properties
Bisley			1,665.23
Chobham			2,085.13
Frimley	and		25,194.67
Camberley			
West			2,427.52
End			
Windlesham			8,376.95
Surrey	Heath	Borough	39,749.50
Council			

- (ii) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Surrey**

Heath Borough Council as its Tax Base for the year 2024/25 shall be 39,749.5 Band 'D' equivalent properties; and

- (iii) with the exception of the amendment to include the disregard of 100% of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions in the calculation of income, as recommended to the Council for agreement, no changes be made to the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme, except as required to incorporate any regulations laid down by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.**

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that

- (i) with effect from 1 April 2024 the Empty Homes Premium be set at the maximum levels allowed in the legislation where the property has been empty for 1, 5 or 10 or more years as detailed in paragraph 1.8;**
- (ii) the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Policy remains unchanged for 2024/25, and the fund available be set at £30,000; and**
- (iii) the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be amended to disregard 100% of War Disablement Pensions and War Widow's Pensions in the calculation of income with effect from 1 April 2024.**

59/E UK Shared Prosperity Fund Year 3 Projects

The Executive considered a report setting out the proposals for the Year 3 projects from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Members were reminded that a total of £1m would be received over 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25, with £881,281 allocated for Year 3 projects. The proposed projects had been developed following discussions on the themes at the Executive meeting in September 2023.

Members were informed that the projects identified included a replacement bin programme and the delivery of three upgraded parks. The Camberley Town Centre public realm enhancement programme included in the list of projects was expected to include upgrading the passageway at Arnold Walk, CCTV improvements, and repairs to the seating in Park Street. It was also noted that the SME decarbonisation loan scheme agreed in March 2023 would fall within this project list.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the projects that will be delivered in Year 3 as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, as set out at Annex 1 to the agenda report, be agreed; and**
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Head of Property and Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic & Income Development and the relevant project Portfolio Holder to make any amendments to the Year 3 project**

programme should be necessary, including assessing the project 3 deliverables set out in Annex 1 to the agenda report.

60/E Youth Council Options

The Executive was reminded that, at its meeting on 17 October 2023, it had considered a report setting out progress on exploring the options for continuation of the Youth Council and the establishment of a Young Mayor, as requested by the Council at its meeting on 26 July 2023 (minute 24/C refers). At that time there had been limited success in seeking a new provider for the Youth Council.

Members were informed that a suitable provider had now been identified and authority was sought to progress the development of a Service Level Agreement. It was noted that the funding identified would cover the period between January and December 2024. A further report would be brought to the Executive in the summer of 2024 to review future funding options. The Chair of the Governance Working Group and the Portfolio Holder for Inclusion & Housing, were asked to jointly agree the approach for the Youth Mayor concept to proceed through relevant approval process.

RESOLVED that

- (i) officers move forward with work to develop an agreement with the identified provider to re-establish Surrey Heath Youth Council; and**
- (ii) a progress report back to the Executive at the conclusion of the 2023/24 academic year, in Summer 2024, including proposals regarding future funding.**

61/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)
62/E	3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

62/E Acquisition of Property

The Executive considered a report detailing a proposal to acquire a property within the London Road development site. The acquisition would be funded from the existing capital budget for the site assembly of the London Road Block.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the building identified in the exempt agenda report be acquired for up to the amount identified in the report, excluding costs from the Vendor;**
- (ii) a total budget, as identified in the report, including acquisition costs be authorised;**
- (iii) authority be delegated to the Head of Property and Economic Development in consultation with the Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services, the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Finance to agree final terms and enter into contract with vendors; and**
- (iv) the acquisition be funded from the existing capital budget for the site assembly of the London Road Block.**

Chair