

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SURREY  
HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL held at  
Surrey Heath House, Camberley on  
13 December 2023**

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+ Cllr Pat Tedder (Mayor)  
+ Cllr Sarbie Kang (Deputy Mayor)

+ Cllr Alan Ashbery	+ Cllr Liz Noble
+ Cllr Louise Ashbery	+ Cllr Jacques Olmo
- Cllr Cliff Betton	+ Cllr David O'Mahoney
+ Cllr Jonny Cope	+ Cllr Ying Perrett
+ Cllr Kel Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr Jonathan Quin
+ Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr Bob Raikes
+ Cllr Shaun Garrett	+ Cllr Morgan Rise
* Cllr Mary Glauert	+ Cllr Murray Rowlands
- Cllr Mark Gordon	+ Cllr John Skipper
* Cllr Julie Hoad	+ Cllr Josh Thorne
+ Cllr Nirmal Kang	+ Cllr Kevin Thompson
+ Cllr Rob Lee	+ Cllr Victoria Wheeler
+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald	+ Cllr David Whitcroft
+ Cllr Leanne MacIntyre	+ Cllr Helen Whitcroft
+ Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath	+ Cllr Valerie White
+ Cllr Lewis Mears	+ Cllr Richard Wilson
- Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam	

+ Present  
- Apologies for absence presented  
\* In attendance virtually

**40/C Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cliff Betton, Mary Glauert, Mark Gordon, Julie Hoad and Sashi Mylvaganam. It was noted that some Members had joined virtually but would not be able to vote.

**41/C Minutes**

It was moved by the Mayor, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, and

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 25  
October 2023 be approved as a correct record.**

**42/C Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor congratulated Age Concern Surrey Heath on its receipt of the Kings Award for Voluntary Service.

The Council was informed that Collingwood School had recently held its Duke of Edinburgh awards where she'd had the privilege of presenting the awards to

students. She extended her congratulations to recipients of Duke of Edinburgh awards from Tomlinscote and Gordons schools.

Members were updated on the many other celebrations the Mayor had been invited to since the last meeting.

The Mayor noted with regret that her planned Civic Service in January 2024 would not be going ahead. She apologised to the Mayors and Chairs of other authorities to whom she would not be able to reciprocate an invitation and to her chosen charity, Sight for Surrey, for the loss of fundraising opportunity. She also extended her thanks to her Chaplain for his support in the preparations.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor conveyed her deepest sympathies to Alderman Alan Whittart and his family following the recent death of a close family member.

#### **43/C Leader's Announcements**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Shaun Macdonald, thanked everyone who had been involved in the preparations and arrangements for Remembrance Day.

Members were informed that, following the decision at the previous Council meeting, the Leader had written to the Chair of Frimley Hospital Trust regarding the new hospital site. He had subsequently met with the Chair of the Trust and the Chief Executive of the Hospital, along with the Council's Chief Executive. A public engagement exercise had been launched to determine the criteria that would be used to select a new site and all Members were encouraged to engage with the consultation. The MP for Surrey Heath had also confirmed that he would continue to support efforts to keep the hospital within the borough.

Following the motion agreed at the previous meeting relating to the persistent odour caused by the sewage works operated by Thames Water, the Leader had written to Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Thames Water. The company's recent attendance at the External Partnerships Select Committee was also noted. He hoped that an offer of financial compensation would be forthcoming from Thames Water and indicated an intention to use it for a community project for children in the areas most affected by the odour.

The Council was updated on decisions taken at recent Executive meetings, including the establishment of new Youth Council, the allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and an updated Local Council Tax Support Scheme that included a new disregard of Ward Disablement Pensions and War Widows Pensions. The items scheduled for consideration at the January 2024 were noted.

The Leader congratulated all members of staff that had achieved professional qualifications and long service awards in the previous few months. He also thanked all council staff and volunteers who had contributed to the preparation of food parcels organised by the BESOM charity.

#### **44/C Executive, Committees and Other Bodies**

- (a) Executive – 21 November and 5 December 2023

It was moved by Councillor Shaun Macdonald, seconded by Councillor Morgan Rise, and

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 21 November and 5 December 2023 be received and the recommendation therein be adopted as set out below:**

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

**RESOLVED 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 of the Executive agenda report;**
  - (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.**
- (b) Planning Applications Committee – 26 October and 23 November 2023

It was moved by Councillor Victoria Wheeler, seconded by Councillor Shaun Garrett, and

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Applications Committee held on 26 October and 23 November 2023 be received.**

- (c) Employment Committee – 16 November 2023

It was moved by Councillor David Whitcroft, seconded by Councillor Lisa Finan-Cooke and

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Employment Committee held on 16 November 2023 be received and the recommendation therein be adopted as set out below:**

**16/EC Pay Settlement 2024/25**

**RESOLVED that a consolidated 4% pay award be agreed for 2024/25.**

- (d) Joint Staff Consultative Group – 27 October, 3 November and 23 November 2023.

It was moved by Councillor Valerie White, seconded by Councillor Lisa Finan-Cooke and

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Group held on 27 October, 3 November and 23 November 2023 be received.**

#### **45/C Motions**

It was moved by Councillor Kevin Thompson, seconded by Councillor Bob Raikes, and

**RESOLVED that**

**(i) this Council**

- a) recognises the bravery and hard work of Surrey’s police officers, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and staff in trying to keep our local communities safe;**
- b) notes that despite their efforts, and Surrey residents paying the highest council tax in England for their police force, just 150 out of over 2,700 residential burglaries were solved in the year to August 2023, and there were over 6,500 vehicle crimes, representing an annual increase of over 14%;**
- c) believes that many more crimes could be prevented in Surrey Heath with an increased community policing presence and that many of our communities have seen a drop in police visibility and presence over recent years;**
- d) notes that the operating budget for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, including staff and running costs, is currently £1,540,000, representing an increase of more than 50% since March 2021;**
- e) further notes that, according to Home Office statistics, the number of PCSOs on Surrey’s streets reduced by more than 50% from 140 to just 68 in the two years since March 2021;**
- f) believes that the cost of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner should be spent on providing frontline police services, funding the equivalent of around 60 new PCSOs;**
- g) further believes that, regardless of the incumbent’s political allegiances, it is clear that the Police and Crime Commissioner is not a necessary role and should be abolished, with its functions transferring to Police Boards, made up of local councillors and representatives from relevant local groups; and**

- (ii) the Leader of the Council be asked to write to the Home Secretary expressing this Council's view that this needlessly political role should be abolished with the financial savings reinvested into frontline policing that would benefit Surrey Heath and all of Surrey.**

## **46/C Motions**

It was moved by Councillor Josh Thorne and seconded by Councillor Jonny Cope that

““this Council

- (i) is concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year, regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media, and other channels;
- (ii) is concerned for the welfare of those animals that are being given as prizes;
- (iii) recognises that many cases of pets being as prizes may go unreported each year;
- (iv) supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Surrey Borough Council owned land.
- (v) agrees to:
  - a) ban outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Surrey Heath Borough Council land; and
  - b) Write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.”

The motion was debated and it was noted that, although the Council did not have an established policy on this matter, it had been established practice to prevent the giving of live animals as prizes as part of the hiring terms and conditions.

It was moved by Councillor Morgan Rise and seconded by Councillor Alan Ashbery that the motion be amended by:

- a) Amending (iv) by replacing “a move to” with “the formalisation of the requirement to”;
- b) Add ‘formalise the outright’ before ban in a) of (v) and inserting “owned” before “land”; and
- c) Inserting an additional paragraph under (v) stating “expand the ban to include the exhibition or performance of wild animals as defined by the Wild Animals in Circuses Act 2019 on Surrey Heath Borough Council owned land”.

Councillor Josh Thorne, as the mover of the original motion, indicated his consent to amend the motion as proposed and it therefore became the substantive motion.

**RESOLVED that**

**(i) the Council**

- a) is concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year, regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media, and other channels;
- b) is concerned for the welfare of those animals that are being given as prizes;
- c) recognises that many cases of pets being as prizes may go unreported each year;
- d) supports the formalisation of the requirement to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Surrey Borough Council owned land;

**(ii) the outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Surrey Heath Borough Council owned land be formalised;**

**(iii) the ban be expanded to include the exhibition or performance of wild animals as defined by the Wild Animals in Circuses Act 2019 on Surrey Heath Borough Council owned land;**

**(iv) the Council writes to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.**

**47/C Governance Working Group**

The Council was informed that the Governance Working Group had considered whether to introduce an Independent Representative on the Audit, Standards and Risk Committee, including whether this role should chair the committee. Having discussed the matter, the Working Group had recognised that the recent introduction of public questions at all committees would provide a route to inform and challenge committees, therefore meeting the aims of introducing independent oversight and scrutiny by a different method.

Members were advised that the Working Group had reviewed the procedures for making decisions using Urgent Action. Having noted historical use of this function, it had agreed to recommend that the statutory officers should need to countersign any decisions made using Urgent Action. A number of other clarifications would be made, including that a statutory officer's deputy was authorised to act in their absence and similarly the deputy Mayor or Vice-Chair or acts in the absence of the Mayor or Chair.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the Governance Working Group’s decision not to progress with introducing arrangements for appointing an Independent Representative on the Audit, Standards & Risk Committee be noted; and**
- (ii) the provisions for making Urgent Action decisions at Part 3, Section B of the Constitution be updated as set out at Annex A to this report, be agreed.**

**48/C Revised Committee Memberships 2023/24 and Appointment of a Vice-Chair of Licensing Committee**

The Council was reminded that, at its meeting on 25 October 2023, it had agreed to amend the size of the Standing Committees and other bodies of the Council. The revised nominations from group leaders that were outstanding at that meeting had been agreed by the Chief Executive by delegated authority and, in line with the delegation, the full list of the revised memberships was being reported to the Council for information.

A vacancy for the Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee had also arisen and nominations for this position were sought.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the revised membership of the Standing Committees and Other Bodies of the Council, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, be noted; and**
- (ii) Councillor Ying Perrett be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.**

**49/C Questions from Councillors**

The Sustainable Transport & Planning Portfolio Holder, Councillor Alan Ashbery, responded to a question from Councillor Murray Rowlands concerning campaigning for 20 mph speed limits on residential roads in the borough; he noted that, whilst this was a function of Surrey County Council, this Council would support such campaigns where there was evidence of local support.

The Net Zero, Wellbeing & Environment Portfolio Holder, Councillor Morgan Rise, responded to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson regarding fly-tipping in the borough and enforcement activity.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Shaun Macdonald, responded to a questions under Council Procedure Rule 11A:

- (i) The Leader replied to Councillor Jonathan Quin about the performance of Royal Mail postal service, indicating his support for inviting representatives to a future meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee;**

- (ii) Councillor Richard Wilson thanked the Leader and the Chief Executive for bringing together the relevant parties to help reduce the inconvenience caused by the closure and replacement of the M3 footbridge between Bagshot and Lightwater;
- (iii) In response to a question from Councillor Murray Rowlands the Leader agreed to look into the lack of public buildings with community space within St Michaels ward; and
- (iv) The Leader noted recent issues with streaming of public meetings, as raised by Councillor Victoria Wheeler, and recognised the need to resolve any issues.

Mayor