

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive
held on 19 March 2024**

+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald

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| + Cllr Alan Ashbery | + Cllr Morgan Rise (in the Chair) |
| + 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 Jonny Cope, Cllr Shaun Garrett, Cllr Julie Hoad, Cllr Lewis Mears, Cllr Murray Rowlands, Cllr Victoria Wheeler and Cllr Richard Wilson

82/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

83/E Questions by Members

The Sustainable Transport & Planning Portfolio Holder, Councillor Alan Ashbery, responded to a question from Councillor Murray Rowlands and confirmed that evaluation of the future use of the land east of Knoll Road site was ongoing as part of the Local Plan process, but no decisions had been made.

Following the recent agreement by Surrey County Council to establish a joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Hampshire County Council and Bracknell Forest Council to scrutinise the relocation of Frimley Park Hospital, Councillor Victoria Wheeler asked a question about ensuring the borough's residents' views were heard at these meetings and as part of the formal consultation. In response Members were updated on steps that had been undertaken to liaise with Frimley Park Hospital to date. Other measures that could be undertaken were discussed, including contacting the Chair of the Joint Committee to ensure that any councillor whose residents would be affected could attend the Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Julie Hoad concerning access to high speed broadband in Lightwater, the Deputy Leader, Councillor Morgan Rise indicated support for contacting senior staff at BT Openreach to ensure that plans for introduction of infrastructure in the village remained a priority for the company. He also felt that it was important to encourage residents to register their interests with BT and other high-speed broadband providers.

Following a question from Councillor Richard Wilson Members were updated on the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant that would take place the following day.

In response to a question from Councillor Murray Rowlands concerning the Community Link Officers employed by Surrey County Council, it was advised that

the Community Development Team was in communication with the officers and their work was supported and promoted by this Council where possible.

84/E Local Development Scheme

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 March 2023 covering the period to 2026.

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. The key dates for preparation of the Local Plan were noted.

RESOLVED that the Surrey Heath Local Development Scheme, as attached at Annex 1 to the agenda report, covering the period 2024 – 2027 be agreed and published on the website.

85/E Local Authority Housing Fund

The Executive was informed that, in December 2022, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had announced a £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund. In March 2023, the Executive had approved the Council's participation in the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) with officers proceeding to acquire six affordable/low-cost properties and one bridging property to support those who may be homeless, at risk of homelessness or who lived in unsuitable temporary accommodation.

Members were advised that, in June 2023, round two of the LAHF had been launched which provided a £250 million fund, with the majority of the additional funding used to house those on Afghan resettlement schemes currently in bridging accommodation and the rest used to ease wider homelessness pressures.

The Executive considered a proposal to deliver two more units of accommodation in the 2024/25 financial year. It was noted that the acquisition would be funded through the LAHF and delivered through the partnership between the Council and Mount Green, an independent housing association, and its partner Stonewater that had been established in the first round of the LAHF.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Council's participation in the Local Authority Housing Fund through the delivery of two further properties by the end of the 2024/25 financial year be agreed; and**
- (ii) the method of delivery of homes under round two of the Local Authority Housing Fund be delegated to the Strategic Director for Environment & Community in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Inclusion and the Strategic Director for**

Finance and Customer Services.

86/E Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Surrey Heath

The Executive considered a report that provided an update on the Phase 1 work undertaken to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Surrey County Council had worked with this Council to produce the LCWIP, during which consultation had been undertaken with residents and other stakeholders. Phase 1 feasibility studies had been completed for 20 aspirational corridors and 11 core walking zones. This was required before requests for funding from the Department of Transport and other sources could be made.

RESOLVED to

- (i) endorse the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as Phase 1 of this project;**
- (ii) note that this endorsement will enable the commencement of the Phase 2 feasibility work in partnership with Surrey County Council (SCC) following sign off by SCC; and**
- (iii) amend the Executive resolution 64/E(ii) dated 16 November 2021 for consultation to take place with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Transport & Planning.**

87/E Community Hub - Exploring Options

The Executive was reminded that the 2023/24 annual plan included an action to bring forward Charity Hub proposals, subject to funding being secured. The original vision of a Charity Hub had been to provide shared space within Camberley Town Centre for charities to work together and as a focal point for residents to gain advice and support, with a particular emphasis on older residents. Proposals for the Community Hub had been initiated prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were updated on enquiries undertaken to establish demand for a facility amongst third sector partners, identify who would use the facility, and whether it would be accessible across the borough to those who most needed the service. It was recognised that accessibility to community information had changed since the Hub had first been proposed, with more people accessing information online and using self-service options. It was therefore considered sensible to link any future creation of a Community Hub with the expected relocation of the Council Offices once more detailed proposals on the relocation and the redevelopment of Surrey Heath House had been agreed. At this time further consultation would be undertaken with the relevant stakeholders.

RESOLVED that

- (i) The development of a Charity Hub in Camberley Town Centre be paused pending decision making about the future location of**

Surrey Heath Council offices and the delivery model that will be adopted following relocation; and

- (ii) As part of any future relocation of Council offices, further engagement with stakeholders takes place (including charity partners and their service users) prior to any decision by the Executive.**

88/E Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference for the Petition review of Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

The Executive considered proposed Terms of Reference for the Task & Finish Group that had been established by the Council at its meeting on 21 February 2024 (minute 58/C refers). The Council had established the Task & Finish Group in response to a petition raised concerning a review of TPO for Wellington Park.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Terms of Reference, as set out in section 3 of the agenda report, enable the review of the existing the Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order to take place and be used to help inform the approach to reviewing other areas order in the Surrey Heath Borough in the future be agreed;**
- (ii) the guidance relied on by the Council's professional officers and processes that constitutes advice in relation to and including special character areas be reviewed; and**
- (iii) the Task & Finish Group reports back to Executive once its findings are completed.**

89/E Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3

The Executive considered a summary of the budget and financial performance for the first three quarters of 2023/24, up to the accounting period ending on 31 December 2023.

RESOLVED that the spend against the approved revenue budget for the period 1 April to 31 December 2023 and the predicted forecast of full year outturn be noted.

90/E Capital Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3

The Executive considered a summary of the progress against the 2023/24 capital programme and budget for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023. 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 31 December 2023 be noted; and**

- (ii) **the proposed reprofiling of budgets to future years, be noted and provisionally approved.**

91/E Report of the External Partnerships Select Committee

The Executive considered a report from the External Partnerships Select Committee detailing the Committee's request for the Leader to write to OFWAT, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Surrey Heath's MP about the need for better regulation of Water Companies in respect of air and land pollution. The recommendation had arisen from the Committee's consideration of an item at its meeting on 28 November 2023 on odour pollution at Camberley Sewage Works.

RESOLVED that a letter be written to OFWAT, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Surrey Heath MP, highlighting the need for better regulation of water companies in relation to Air and Land Pollution, including the potential for additional enforcement powers for local authorities.

92/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 also considered the write off of property and sundry debts. Debts written off using delegated authority were also noted.

RESOLVED that

- (i) bad debts in respect of Council Tax for £130,393.93 and those in respect of Business Rates for £160,983.92, totalling £291,377.85 be approved for write off;**
- (ii) bad debts in respect of sundry debts for £3,320.20 be approved for write off;**
- (iii) the removal of 10 housing and sundry debts totalling £5,343.26 that has been carried out under the scheme of delegated authority by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services be noted, as the debts are no longer recoverable under the Limitation Act 1980;**
- (iv) the write-off of 58 sundry debts totalling £27,322.86, which are individually below £1,500, carried out under the scheme of delegated authority by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services be noted; and**

(v) bad debts in respect of 15 property debts totalling £338,115.24 be approved for write off.

Chair