

COUNCIL MEETING

5 October 2016

ADDENDUM TO THE COUNCIL MINUTE BOOK

8. **External Partnerships Select Committee - 20 September 2016** (Pages 3 - 8)
9. **Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee - 28 September 2016** (Pages 9 - 14)

Minutes of a Meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee held at Surrey Heath House on 20 September 2016

+ Cllr Paul Deach (Chairman)
+ Cllr Dan Adams (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Ian Cullen	+ Cllr Adrian Page
+ Cllr Ruth Hutchinson	+ Cllr Robin Perry
+ Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans	Cllr Chris Pitt
+ Cllr David Lewis	Cllr Joanne Potter
+ Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper	+ Cllr Nic Price
+ Cllr Alan McClafferty	+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram
- Cllr Max Nelson	+ Cllr Ian Sams

+ Present
- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Ian Sams for Cllr Max Nelson

In Attendance: Cllr Rodney Bates
Steve Bailey, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership
Julian Chun, Sentinal Housing
James Pennington, Thames Valley Housing Association
Robert Mills, Accent South
Fiona Shipp, Basingstoke Canal Authority
James Taylor, Basingstoke Canal Authority

8/EP Chairman's Announcements and Welcome to Guests

The Chairman welcomed Julian Chun, Sentinal Housing, James Pennington, Thames Valley Housing Association, Robert Mills, Accent South, Steve Bailey, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Fiona Shipp, Basingstoke Canal Authority and James Taylor, Basingstoke Canal Authority to the meeting.

9/EP Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee held on 28 June 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10/EP Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

11/EP Housing Associations in Surrey Heath

Robert Mills, Regional Housing Director, Accent, Julian Chun, Operations Director, Sentinal, and James Pennington, Regional Land Director, Thames Valley Housing Association, gave a presentation in respect of the work the three Housing Associations in the region and the current challenges faced by the sector.

The ongoing reform of the welfare system was the most significant challenge currently faced by Housing Associations across the Country. The introduction of a number of changes including the Spare Room Subsidy, a cap on the maximum amount of benefits that working age people could claim, the introduction of Universal Credit and the introduction of Local Housing Allowances which capped the amount of Housing Benefit paid according to the size of the household instead of the size of the property were resulting in an increasing number of tenants being faced with a shortfall in funding and incurring rent arrears. Housing Associations were now doing more pre-tenancy work with potential tenants to ensure the home they were looking at was affordable and the tenancy was sustainable before a tenancy agreement was entered into. However, if rent arrears did occur then Housing Associations worked closely with tenants to manage the debt and recoup the arrears. Eviction because of rent arrears was usually considered as a last resort with eviction orders only sought if tenants failed to stick to debt management plans agreed with the Housing Association.

In cases of anti-social behaviour robust action was taken. If an eviction occurred as a result of anti-social behaviour then the tenant was usually deemed to have made themselves intentionally homeless and housing associations no longer had a duty to accommodate them. Consequently the tenant would then normally have to be housed in the private rented sector.

It was unclear how many Surrey Heath residents would be affected by the introduction of market rent for high income social tenants i.e. those tenancies where the annual household income of the two highest earners in the household was over £30,000 (Over £40,000 per annum in London). An initial survey of Sentinal's tenants had found that 15% of their current tenant base would be affected by the changes. Most housing associations only asked for information pertaining to the financial circumstances of a tenant before a tenancy was granted and tenancy agreements might have to be changed in order to force tenants to reveal their earnings on an ongoing basis.

Work was taking place to increase the number of affordable homes available in the Borough and Housing Associations were looking at different ways to increase their stock levels; for example Thames Valley Housing had recently started work on the Opal development in London. Whilst this was a commercial property development the profits from the development would be used to finance affordable housing elsewhere in the region. It was recognised that where there was a requirement for a development to provide only one or two units of affordable housing provision this could make the development unviable or the additional costs of service charges could make the affordable property unaffordable and in these cases housing associations often took commuted sums from the developers to enable them to provide the affordable housing in a larger block elsewhere.

The Committee thanked Robert Mills, Julian Chun and James Pennington for their informative briefing.

12/EP Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership

Steve Bailey, Manager, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, gave a presentation in respect of the work of the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership. The Partnership had been set up in 1990 to co-ordinate the work required to maintain and enhance the environment in the Blackwater Valley and its principle aims were:

- To maintain the Valley as an open gap with enhanced landscape
- To conserve wildlife
- Improve the quality of the River Blackwater
- Co-ordinate recreation and conservation initiatives across the area
- Ensure access to and use of the Valley for sustainable transport

The work undertaken by the Partnership since its inception had had a significant impact on the flora and fauna of the area with increased fish stocks and sightings of otters in the river, the restoration of wetland areas and reed beds and the establishment of seven nature reserves along the length of the Blackwater Valley area.

The Partnership received core funding of £104,000 from Borough, Parish and County Council's bordering the Blackwater Valley; additional income of £222,800 was received in return for managing and looking after sites in the vicinity of the Blackwater Valley for other agencies. A suggestion that additional income be raised by opening up flooded gravel pits to sailing clubs and other leisure companies was acknowledged however the Committee was informed that the Partnership did not own the land and whilst negotiations to secure a share of any profits from activities in addition to their management fee did take place the majority of any profits went to the landowners.

Through the utilisation of SANG payments the Partnership was in the process of completing the following projects to improve connectivity across the Blackwater Valley area:

- The improvement of pedestrian and cycle routes between the Meadows Roundabout and Sainsburys on the A331.
- The construction of a pedestrian and cycle crossing on the A331 at Riverside Way to the Blackwater Valley Car Park
- Resurfacing and widening of the off-road Blackwater Valley Path between the Blackwater Valley car park and Frimley Railway Station
- Widening and resurfacing of the Hatches between Frimley Green and North Camp Railway Station

The Blackwater Valley Trust had been set up to supplement and support the work of the Partnership however whilst there had in the past been a number of fundraising successes this resource was not currently being utilised as effectively as it might be following the deaths of a number of the trustees.

It was acknowledged that the Partnership's website needed to be revamped and work to complete this was underway.

The Partnership acknowledged that the funding of non-essential services was coming under increasing pressure across the whole of the public sector and concern was expressed that if one public sector body ceased their funding contributions whilst it might be possible to fill the gap in the short term it could set a precedent which would result in other public sector bodies withdrawing funding and the Partnership becoming unsustainable.

The Committee thanked Steven Bailey for his update.

RESOLVED that the use of Council communication channels to raise awareness of the Blackwater Valley be explored.

13/EP Basingstoke Canal Authority

Fiona Shipp, Canal Manager, and James Taylor, Strategic Manager, gave a presentation in respect of the work of the Basingstoke Canal Authority.

The Basingstoke Canal Authority had responsibility for maintaining and enhancing the 37 miles long Canal which ran from the River Wey Navigation at New Haw down towards Basingstoke. 32 of the Canal's 37 miles were now navigable and the Canal had 29 locks, 1 dry-dock, 3 aqueducts and 2 tunnels. A team of six rangers oversaw the Canal's upkeep and were in call for 24 hours a day every day of the year. A new management team had been brought in in 2010.

65% of the Authority's £750,000 a year revenue budget was raised from grants provided by town, parish, borough and county council's bordering the canal. The remaining 35% was raised through income generation from a range of activities including campsite fees, angling licences and mooring fees. Increases in mooring fees to bring them in line with national averages had resulted in a significant rise in income and with further improvements to the canal and an increased number of moorings being made available in the coming years it was expected that this income stream would increase further.

The Authority's work was supported and enhanced by the Basingstoke Canal Society. As a registered charity, the Society took the lead on fundraising activities and proactively identified and approached grant funding schemes for support. The Society's volunteers played a key role in enhancing visitor experiences through a range of activities including conservation work, running the visitor centre and organising and running regular boat trips for the public along the Canal including its immensely popular Children's Father Christmas Cruises. A leaflet detailing the range of volunteering activities had been developed to raise awareness of the Society and to encourage people to get involved in their work and the Society had taken on responsibility for raising the canal's profile across a number of social media platforms. Volunteers had also played a key role in carrying out boat audits along the length of the canal a project that had resulted in the removal of a number

of derelict boats from the canal and identified boat owners who had been avoiding paying mooring fees.

The Committee thanked Fiona Shipp and James Taylor for their update.

RESOLVED that the use of Council communication channels to raise awareness of the Basingstoke Canal be explored.

14/EP Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a report setting out a proposed work programme for the Committee for the rest of the year.

The following agenda items were suggested for consideration:

- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust's Sustainability and Transformation Plan.
- Actions by partners to try and reduce inequality in the Borough.

CHAIRMAN

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**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Performance and Finance Scrutiny
Committee held at Surrey Heath House
on 28 September 2016**

- + Cllr Alan McClafferty (Chairman)
- + Cllr Jonathan Lytle (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Dan Adams	+ Cllr Max Nelson
- Cllr Bill Chapman	+ Cllr Robin Perry
+ Cllr Edward Hawkins	+ Cllr Chris Pitt
- Cllr Paul Ilnicki	+ Cllr Wynne Price
+ Cllr David Lewis	+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram
+ Cllr Oliver Lewis	+ Cllr Victoria Wheeler

- + Present
- Apologies for absence presented

In Attendance: Cllr Moira Gibson, Karen Whelan, Andrew Crawford, Sarah Groom, Julia Hutley-Savage, Louise Livingston, Kelvin Menon and Richard Payne.

10/PF Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and in particular, welcomed the Council Leader, Councillor Moira Gibson and the Chief Executive, Karen Whelan, who had agreed to attend for discussions on the Annual Performance Report and the Annual Plan.

11/PF Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 6 July 2016, were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

12/PF End of Year Performance 2015/16

The Committee considered a report on the Council's performance for 2015/16. This report had previously been considered by the Executive in August 2016 and would be the final report in its current format, reflecting changes proposed to the Annual Plan and the introduction of a 5 year plan to replace the previous 10 year Strategy.

Members noted that inconsistencies in the Red/Amber/Green (RAG) report had been raised by the Executive and measures had been incorporated into future reporting to introduce a greater level of clarity.

The proposed changes to the report format and content were welcomed, particularly in respect of more clarity on whether or not an issue was fully within the Council's control and whether targets were to be achieved in that particular year or a more extended period.

The Chief Executive reported that, in an environment where councils were required to respond quickly to change, it had been considered prudent to introduce

changes to long, medium and short term measures which permitted the Council to maintain and improve services against a background of reduced funding and resources, whilst providing greater clarity for Borough residents on what had been achieved against targets set.

Within the report, there were a small number of targets which had not been met, notably in respect of the Museum/Heritage Centre. It had been recognised that whilst improvements were needed in some services, these were not as high a priority as some other more key issues and the Council had adjusted its focus accordingly.

Members sought clarification of the actual subsidy levels for the Camberley Theatre and how these compared to target reductions set. It was emphasised that the Council would need to take a broad view on all subsidies, including those to the Theatre.

The Committee welcomed a number of notable achievements from the report, including ongoing moves to regenerate Camberley Town Centre, investment in properties, achieving the 'Gold' level in Investors in People plus the 'Commitment' level of the Workplace Wellbeing Charter and achieving income returns at 20% above the Local Authorities average.

Frimley Lodge Park had been re-awarded a Green Flag and Members would be asked in the future to consider whether or not the Park should be upgraded to 'Sub-Regional Park' status.

In response to Members' queries, the Leader and Chief Executive noted that:

- (i) Ashwood House – Negotiations were proceeding with tendering organisations. Proposals would be considered by a Design Panel in October 2016 and a report would be submitted to the Planning Applications Committee shortly thereafter;
- (ii) Gyratory System – Funding was available for the Gyratory System, the majority of which would come from the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership. However, funding for the remainder of the A30 was still to be secured;
- (iii) Arena Leisure Centre – A working group was actively considering options for the Centre and a report would be submitted to the Council by the end of 2016; and
- (iv) Complaints – Whilst the Council was in general very good at addressing complaints, there were areas where complaints at the different levels were considered to need further consideration. The majority of complaints related to planning and to a lesser degree, council tax. Complaint handling in these areas was the subject of a review.

Resolved, that the report be noted.

13/PF Annual Plan 2016/17

The Committee considered a report on an updated Annual Plan for 2016/17, including an overview of the vision and objectives from the Five Year Strategy and indicating the outputs and success measures that would be delivered in 2016/17 for each of the new priorities. The Annual Plan had been considered by the Executive in August 2016.

Members noted that the Annual Plan had been simplified and was more succinct, with a more definitive breakdown of what should be achieved and measured. Outcomes would be reviewed against success measures at the 6 month point and at the end of the year.

The Committee was informed that significant changes to the 5 Year Plan had impacted on the Annual Plan, building in an unavoidable delay in presenting to the Committee.

Councillor Moira Gibson noted that the new format, whilst being much improved on the previous model, would still require adjustment to get the right level of information, to allow a balance between informing members of the public and providing the type of data on key performance areas that Members would need to engage in proper scrutiny. Members would be encouraged to input to consideration on this.

A number of concerns were raised in respect of historic decisions and delays in areas such as highways improvements in the Yorktown Business Park. It was, however, noted that many of the concerns raised related to responsibilities that did not lie with this Council.

The Chairman thanked the Council Leader and Chief Executive for attending and discussing the Performance Report and Annual Plan with the Committee.

Resolved, that the Annual Plan for 2016/17, as set out in Annex A to the Officer report, be noted.

14/PF Review of Reserves and Provisions

The Committee considered a report which detailed the criteria for maintaining individual Reserves and Provisions, following the closure of the 2015/16 accounts. The Executive Head of Finance detailed the difference between reserves and provisions and noted that getting the right levels thereof would become more critical when the 100% localisation of Business Rates was introduced.

Members were asked to consider whether or not the criteria relating to specific reserves or provisions continued to be appropriate and to review the actual sums set aside for each.

When considering the individual reserves and provisions, the Committee noted the following responses:

- (i) Community Fund – Although £75,000 was available per annum, the level of funding used was dependent on the number of qualifying grant applications submitted;

- (ii) Blackwater Valley and Developer Contributions – This funding was for the maintenance of the park and facilities for the period of its useful life and had been generated through developer contributions;
- (iii) Surrey Family Support Programme – This had been front-funded for set up and operation and was now being used for day-to-day support. At such a point as the fund became depleted, Members would have to consider what service was needed and how to fund/resource that service; and
- (iv) Pot Hole Repairs – These related to potholes in property/land owned by this Council and therefore not a Highways responsibility.

Resolved, that the Committee proposes to the Executive that all Reserves and Provisions and the associated criteria, as detailed in the Officer's report, remain unchanged.

15/PF Working Groups

There were no proposals to establish any task and finish groups.

16/PF Work Programme

The Committee considered a report on a possible work programme for the remainder of the 2016/17.

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had met with officers and had proposed that in future:

- (i) Executive Summary - Reports should start with an Executive Summary;
- (ii) Presentations - Where possible, presentations should be limited to 10 minutes and copied to the Chairman in advance of the meeting;
- (iii) Portfolio Holders (PHs) –
 - Prior to meetings, PHs be asked to submit a short written brief for inclusion in the agenda.
 - PHs be asked to indicate how their portfolios impact on the community and if possible give an indication of their objectives and the strategies which will be used to achieve these;
 - Presentations to be kept to a minimum to maximise question opportunities.
 - Given that only 4 meetings were scheduled for each year and there were currently 6 portfolio holders, it had been suggested by the Leader that, rather than increase the number of meetings, the Committee should invite more than one portfolio holder to each meeting.

- Members be asked to, where possible, submit questions in advance to allow PHs to provide more detailed responses at the meeting;
- (iv) Reports to Note – A number of matters which the Committee was required to consider each year showed little if any change year on year, examples being air quality monitoring or Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), where the regulations have changed but no interventions have been made. It was suggested that an update report be presented once a year incorporating all such issues.
- (v) Priorities – It was recognised that scrutiny of 2 Portfolio Holders would limit the time available for other scrutiny. It was suggested that in order of importance, the Committee should consider scrutiny of portfolio holders, issues that the Committee was required to consider and other matters, as they were raised.

The Chairman noted that he was having discussions on the timing of reports, to seek more timely availability of key reports such as the Annual Plan. The availability of the Transformation and Regulatory Portfolio Holders had already been confirmed and the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holders would now be invited.

Resolved, that the Committee Work Programme for the remainder of 2016/17, as indicated below, be agreed.

DATE	TOPIC	OFFICER
7 December 2016		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders – Transformation/ Finance	Louise Livingston/ Kelvin Menon
2	½ Year Treasury Management Report	Kelvin Menon
3	½ Year Finance Report	Kelvin Menon
4	Complaints and Ombudsman	Lyn Smith
5	Mid-Year Performance Report	Sarah Groom
6	Transformation linked reports	LL/KW
7	Working Groups	Andrew Crawford
8	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford
22 March 2017		
1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders - Regulatory	Jenny Rickard
2	3 rd Quarter Finance Report	Kelvin Menon
3	Executive Summary Report	Andrew Crawford
4	Corporate Risk	Kelvin Menon
5	Regulatory linked reports	Jenny Rickard
6	Working Groups	Andrew Crawford
7	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford

Chairman