

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Performance
and Finance Scrutiny Committee held at
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House,
Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on 2
October 2018**

- + Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper (Chairman)
- + Cllr Darryl Ratiram (Vice Chairman)

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| - Cllr David Allen | - Cllr Robin Perry |
| + Cllr Rodney Bates | + Cllr Chris Pitt |
| + Cllr Bill Chapman | + Cllr Joanne Potter |
| + Cllr Surinder Gandhum | Cllr Ian Sams |
| + Cllr Edward Hawkins | + Cllr Wynne Price |
| Cllr Paul Ilnicki | + Cllr Victoria Wheeler |
| + Cllr David Lewis | + Cllr Valerie White |
| Cllr Max Nelson | |

- + Present
- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Councillor Bates for Councillor Allen
Councillor Gandhum for Councillor Perry

Members In Attendance: Cllr Mrs Vivienne Chapman
Cllr Paul Deach
Cllr Colin Dougan
Cllr Craig Fennell
Cllr Josephine Hawkins
Cllr Alan McClafferty
Cllr Adrian Page

Officers in Attendance: Daniel Harrison, Executive Head: Business
Julia Hutley-Savage, Principal Lawyer
Louise Livingston, Executive Head: Transformation
Kelvin Menon, Executive Head: Finance
Tim Pashen, Executive Head: Community
Richard Payne, Executive Head: Corporate
Jenny Rickard, Executive Head: Regulatory
Matt Smyth, Director, Joint Waste Solutions

8/PF Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 4th July 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9/PF Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10/PF Member Call-In - Car Parking Charges

The Committee considered a Call-In in respect of a decision taken by the Executive on 12th September 2018 to change the parking tariffs in Camberley Town Centre multi-storey car parks.

The Call-In, which had been submitted in accordance with Part 4 Section C of the Council's Constitution by Councillor Edward Hawkins and Councillor Valerie White, cited the following elements of the decision which gave grounds for concern:

- i. The decision to raise car-parking charges had been taken at a time when the income from car parking was falling; footfall in the shopping centre had fallen and work would be underway on the High Street, which would potentially cause disruption to shoppers and traders.
- ii. Recommendations i and ii in the original Executive report had been combined without adequate debate.

In their submission, Councillors Hawkins and White also set out the following reasons for their decision to submit the Call-In:

- The report considered by the Executive contained insufficient information as to the proper timing of the scheduled works.
- There was a lack of information on the viability of Camberley Town centre and the impact of the revenue raised in the current financial year.
- Bracknell, a competitor town, was reported to have decided not to increase charges in the car parks it manages.

The Committee acknowledged that the decision taken by the Executive had been a finely balanced one. However the Committee felt that the original Executive report lacked sufficient detail, particularly in relation to footfall data, income generation and ongoing costs, and this had prevented the Executive from looking at car parking in relation to the wider economic situation. Consequently, it was considered that the Executive had not been in a position to make a fully informed decision.

Councillor Hawkins reported that feedback from residents on the proposals had been negative with many expressing the opinion that they did not get good value for money from Camberley Town Centre and consequently elected to shop in neighbouring towns. Traders had also expressed concerns about the impact that raising car parking charges at a time when trade levels continued to decrease year on year would have on future trade.

The Committee noted that it had been proposed to increase all parking charges except evening charges which would be reduced in order to support the night time economy. It was felt this discrepancy was contradictory at a time when traders were experiencing year on year falls in trading levels. Furthermore, the Council should be working to develop strategies that supported local businesses.

It was noted that four different organisations, Collectively Camberley, Standard Life, Montagu Evans and Surrey Heath Borough Council, worked to promote Camberley town centre. The Committee questioned what synergies there were between the four organisations and whether this was effective. It was also questioned whether some of the BID money might be used to support car parking.

The Committee noted the proposal to introduce a monthly parking pass. However, it was queried why buying either three or six individual monthly passes was cheaper than buying a three or six month pass. It was clarified that the one-month parking pass was administered online and therefore the cost of a one-month pass was lower than the three

and six-month passes, which required an element of officer input which had to be incorporated into the pricing.

The Committee also raised concern that in combining recommendations i and ii without an adequate explanation, the Executive had been deprived of the opportunity to fully debate the merits and drawbacks of each aspect of the recommendation at the time the decision was taken. Notwithstanding this, the Committee strongly supported the principle of introducing subsidised annual permits for those working in the town centre who were earning the living wage or below and agreed that introducing these subsidised permits should be carried out as quickly as possible.

It was agreed that the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to examine the provision and offering of the car parks in Camberley Town Centre would be an appropriate way forward. It was suggested that if a Task and Finish Group was to be established then its remit should include:

- The total parking package offered in town centre car parks
- Looking at the whole parking offering and charging regime to include a reasonable provision of free parking with not less than one hour.
- The provision for disabled parking.
- The support that the Council gives to retailers to include the Government's Business Rates Retention pilot.
- A report from Collectively Camberley on the work that they do to promote the town.
- Review the subsidised permits of £150 per annum for those on a living wage.

It was acknowledged that the suggested Task and Finish Group would report its findings after the Executive decision had been re-examined by the Executive and agreed that if it did go ahead the Task and Finish Group's proposed terms of reference would be considered at the Committee's next meeting on 5th December 2018.

It was agreed that the Called-In decision should be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration with the recommendation that the decision be taken only when more complete data relating to footfall and income and expenditure was made available and that the proposed increase in charges and the proposed introduction of subsidised permits for those earning below the living wage be considered as two distinct recommendations.

RESOLVED that:

- i. The Called-In decision to implement changes to the parking tariffs in Camberley Town centre multi-storey car parks be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration because:
 - The decision taken had been based on a report that contained insufficient information to enable a fully informed decision to be made.
 - Increasing parking charges at a time when the town centre traders were facing already difficult trading conditions would further depress footfall through the town centre.
 - Considering Recommendations i and ii as a single indivisible recommendation had prevented adequate debate.
- ii. The Executive be advised to:
 1. Make its decision only when more complete data relating to footfall and income and expenditure was made available; and that
 2. The proposed increase in charges and the proposed introduction of subsidised permits for those earning below the living wage be considered as two distinct recommendations.

- iii. A Task and Finish Group be established to examine council provided parking in Camberley town centre.

11/PF Portfolio Holder Update: Places and Strategy

Councillor Craig Fennell presented an update on the work carried out to date during the 2018/19 municipal year in his capacity as Executive Portfolio Holder for Places and Strategy.

It was noted that the new portfolio covered the following key areas: car parking, heritage services, public and open spaces, sports and leisure and strategic infrastructure and the public realm. Arising from the Committee's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Officers were working with the IT providers to try to identify a solution so that 3 and 6 month parking permits could be administered online. Once this work was complete the price of the three and six month permits would be reviewed.
- Relocating the car wash in Main Square car park would improve accessibility around the main stair well on level 3.
- Multiple payment providers were being used to collect car parking payments because the Ring Go system was not compatible was the automatic number plate recognition system used in a number of the car parks.
- Income received from the town centre car parks was used to subsidise the ongoing maintenance costs of the out of town car parks and any investment in the out of town car parks was linked to the income levels received by the Council.
- The Rugby Fans in Training project had been limited to 15 places per club.
- It was confirmed that the whole Council would have the opportunity to consider and debate the proposals for the Arena Leisure Centre replacement.
- The Walks in Surrey Heath Programme was a well-established programme, which continued to be well supported.
- Ice Skate Camberley would not be taking place in 2018 however, an extensive programme of events had been planned for the weeks leading up to Christmas.
- The electricity points installed in Southwell Park Road for the 2016 ice rink were used for events held in the London Road Recreation Ground. It was agreed that information relating to the cost of installing the points would be circulated.
- An extensive playground refurbishment programme was in place and clarification would be given as to whether the Orchard Way Play Area had been included.
- It was clarified that 15% of any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments would be allocated for local capital schemes in those wards that were not part of a parish council to ensure all the borough's wards had parity.
- Installing charging points for electric cars on the roads fell within the remit of the County Council. The possibility of utilising Rapid Electric Charging schemes would be explored.
- It was acknowledged that transient traveller encampments were an ongoing issue for which there was no simple solution and a County wide working group had been set up to examine the issue. Injunctions taken out by other local authorities had been focused on named individuals and named locations and it was considered unlikely that they would become a widespread method of managing the issues.
- The new Heritage Space in the Square was seeing an increase in visitor numbers. The Committee asked that their thanks be passed on to all the volunteers and staff for their work and commitment to raising the profile of Surrey Heath's heritage amongst its residents.

The Committee thanked Councillor Fennell for his update.

12/PF Portfolio Holder Update: Economic Development

Councillor Colin Dougan presented an update on the work carried out to date during the 2018/19 municipal year in his capacity as Executive Portfolio Holder for Economic Development. Arising from the Committee's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- It was agreed that the Economic Development Officer would liaise with ward councillors to establish links with business associations in the villages.
- Surrey County Council was leading on an event to look at tourism across Surrey. It was acknowledged attendance at the event might be a useful starting point to identifying any synergies that might be incorporated into the Economic Development Strategy.
- Officers were in the process of reviewing four applications for funding from the Kevin Cantlon Shop Front Improvement Scheme.
- The terms and conditions of the Kevin Cantlon Shop Front Improvement Scheme had been reviewed. It had been considered that the application process was straightforward and that the terms and conditions of the scheme were appropriate given the profile of its intended business targets i.e. local independent small businesses with no more than five outlets. Officers were engaging with agents and shop owners to raise awareness of the scheme. An 'advert' had also been developed which would be circulated to members to distribute through their own networks.

The Committee thanked Councillor Dougan for his update.

13/PF Joint Waste Contract

Matt Smyth, Director, Joint Waste Solutions (JWS), gave a presentation on the work that had taken place to implement the joint waste contract in Surrey Heath. The presentation included an overview of the history and key features of the contract, key performance data and a summary of key development and improvement areas.

The Committee was informed that work to develop the joint waste contract had started in May 2013 and Surrey Heath Borough Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, Woking Borough Council and Mole Valley District Council had signed a ten-year contract with Amey in May 2017. The contract had been developed to be a co-operative partnership contract, which other local authorities could join at any time.

It was acknowledged that although the number of missed bin collections being reported had reduced the number of missed residual waste and food waste collections was still too high. Furthermore, IT issues had caused problems in the run up to the launch of the new garden waste collections and this had affected the number of residents electing to take up the service. Priority areas for improvement included the number of missed food waste collections, repeat missed collections, the length of time that it took to rectify a missed collection, improvements to ICT systems and working with Amey's contact centre to improve the levels of customer service received by residents.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- A significant amount of work had taken place to ensure that all the data held by Amey was correct and an independent third party was nearing the end of a review of all the data held to verify its accuracy going forward.

- The missed bin collection target was no more than 80 per 100,000.
- Food waste was now collected separately from the main residual waste and recycling collections and JWS was working with Amey to resolve the operational issues that meant food waste caddies were being missed for example residual waste bins were being replaced in such a way that they obscured the food caddy from view.
- The design of the vehicles used for clothing and small electricals collections meant that the load area was smaller. Although the number of reported missed clothing and small electrical collections was relatively small it was thought that rather than reporting the missed collection residents were just taking the items back. It was requested that members encourage residents to lodge a complaint when this occurred so that an accurate picture of the scale of the problem could be obtained.
- It was confirmed that municipal waste collections started at 6am however commercial waste operators could start work earlier. Complaints about noise from commercial operators should be registered with the Council as a noise complaint.
- It was agreed that reports that bins were being left obstructing footpaths and driveways after they had been emptied would be investigated.
- Rushmoor Borough Council had expressed an interest in joining the contract before the procurement process had started however it had proved logistically too difficult to incorporate only part of Hampshire County Council as the waste disposal authority into the contract.
- Staff recruitment and retention was key to providing a good service.
- The benefits of joining the contract was actively marketed to other Surrey authorities and Surrey County Council had transferred a number of its waste functions into JWS.
- The vehicle In Cab technology could be used to record real time data on whether bins were being presented for collection however, the technology was not always being used and JWS was working with Amey to improve this.

It was requested that Members send any complaints about repeated missed collections to surreyheath@jointwastesolutions.org. It was agreed that the concerns raised by the Committee would be raised with the Amey Account manager.

The Committee acknowledged that mobilising the contract had been a significant piece of work and the hard work of officers to improve the service should be recognised.

The Committee thanked Matt Smyth for his update.

14/PF Annual Report on the Treasury Management Service and Actual Prudential Indicators for 2017/18

The Committee received the annual Treasury Management Service and Prudential Indicators Report for the 2017/18 financial year.

It was reported that at the end of the 2017/18 financial year, the Council had £119.7million of borrowing and £14.9million of treasury investments with the majority of the Council's borrowing being used for short term loans. During the 2017/18 financial year the Council had entered into £1.1million of new short term borrowing.

The Council had complied with its agreed prudential indicators for 2017/18 and it had been confirmed that the Council had adopted a prudent approach in relation to investment activity with priority being given to security and liquidity over yield.

The Committee noted the report.

15/PF Council Finances

The Committee received a report setting out the financial position of the Council at the end of the first quarter (April to June) of the 2018/19 financial year,

It was reported that at the end of the first quarter £17.5million had been spent on capital expenditure with £13.5million of this having been spent on property acquisitions including the Trade City Industrial Estate and Windlemere Golf Club. £1.9million had been spent on the purchase of new refuse vehicles.

The Committee noted that the Council had agreed to take a reduction in rental income to keep House of Fraser in Camberley Town Centre.

The Committee noted the report.

16/PF Complaints Monitoring Annual Report 2017/18

The Committee received a report summarising the outcome of complaints received by the Council at either Stage 2 or Stage 3 of the Council's complaints policy.

During the 2017/18 municipal year 38 formal complaints had been dealt with at either stage 2 or stage 3. Of these, 29 had been found to be not justified, three were found to be partly justified, five had been found to be justified and a resolution was still outstanding on one complaint.

During 2017/18, the Local Government Ombudsman had received 18 complaints relating to Surrey Heath Borough Council. Of these eight had been closed following initial enquiries, four had been referred back to the Council for local resolution, one was considered to have been invalid and advice had been given on one complaint. A detailed investigation had been held into one complaint and this had resulted in the complaint being not upheld. Three complaints were still to be determined and the outcome of these would be reported in the 2018/19 report.

It was agreed that future reports would include contextual information relating to the complaints received and details of the lessons learned and changes resulting from the complaints.

The Committee thanked officers for the work that they did to ameliorate problems for residents so that the majority of complaints were resolved at an early stage.

The Committee noted the report.

17/PF Information Items

The Committee received and noted a report summarising activity over the past twelve months in the following areas: the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000, progress against the Air Quality Action Plan and Equalities and diversity.

18/PF Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a report setting out its work programme for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

It was agreed that an update on Hammersmith and Fulham's approach to debt recovery would be added to the agenda of the meeting on 20th March 2019.

The Committee noted the report.

Chairman