

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SURREY
HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL held at
Surrey Heath House, Camberley on
15 December 2021**

+ Cllr Sarah Jane Croke (Mayor)
+ Cllr Helen Whitcroft (Deputy Mayor)

- Cllr Dan Adams	+ Cllr David Lewis
+ Cllr Graham Alleway	* Cllr David Mansfield
+ Cllr Peter Barnett	+ Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath
+ Cllr Rodney Bates	+ Cllr Charlotte Morley
* Cllr Cliff Betton	+ Cllr Alan McClafferty
+ Cllr Richard Brooks	+ Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam
* Cllr Vivienne Chapman	+ Cllr Adrian Page
* Cllr Paul Deach	+ Cllr Robin Perry
+ Cllr Colin Dougan	+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram
+ Cllr Tim FitzGerald	+ Cllr Morgan Rise
+ Cllr Sharon Galliford	+ Cllr John Skipper
+ Cllr Shaun Garrett	+ Cllr Graham Tapper
+ Cllr Mark Gordon	+ Cllr Pat Tedder
+ Cllr Edward Hawkins	+ Cllr Victoria Wheeler
* Cllr Josephine Hawkins	+ Cllr Valerie White
- Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans	+ Cllr Kristian Wrenn

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented
* In attendance virtually but did not vote

46/C Suspension of Council Procedure Rules

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

RESOLVED that Council Procedure Rule 21.2 (requirement to stand) be suspended for the meeting.

47/C Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dan Adams, Cliff Betton, Vivienne Chapman, Paul Deach, Josephine Hawkins, Rebecca Jennings-Evans and David Mansfield. It was noted that some councillors had joined the meeting virtually but would not be entitled to vote.

48/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 27 October 2021 be approved as a correct record.

49/C Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor presented a video of the many events she had attended since the previous Council meeting. Of particular note were the events associated with commemorating Armistice Day.

50/C Leader's Announcements

The Leader welcomed the new Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services, Bob Watson, to the Council and thanked Amanda Fahey for her work when covering the role on an interim basis. He also paid tribute to the police Borough Commander, Alick James, who would be moving to a new role in Guildford, and advised that Acting Inspector Samantha White would be covering the role until Inspector Gemma Taylor took up the role in the New Year.

The Council was informed that the refurbishment works to the exterior of the Camberley Theatre had been completed on schedule.

It was reported that, since the launch of the Household Assistance Grants at the end of November, approximately 900 applications had been received and £15,000 had been granted to date. The building and refurbishment work for the new emergency homeless night stop accommodation had been completed and the facility was due to be handed over to the Hope Hub on schedule; the Hope Hub was recruiting and training staff in preparation for opening in the New Year.

The Leader informed the Council that the Garden Waste service was still suspended due to shortages of HGV drivers. However, a second interim collection had been arranged for the week commencing 10 January 2022.

Members were informed that the anticipated White Paper on levelling up and local government reform had been delayed until the New Year. The Leader also advised that, in view of the ongoing pandemic, the Council continued to lobby for Councils to hold meetings virtually and had written to the MP for Surrey Heath and the Leader of the House of Commons on the matter.

51/C Executive, Committees and Other Bodies

- (a) Executive – 16 November and 7 December 2021

It was moved by Councillor Alan McClafferty, seconded by Councillor Colin Dougan, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 16 November and 7 December 2021 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted as set out below:

75/E Calculation and Setting of the Council Tax Base for 2022/23

RESOLVED that

- (i) **with effect from 1 April 2022 the Empty Homes Premium be introduced at the maximum levels allowed in the legislation**

where the property has been empty for 2, 5 or 10 more years as detailed in paragraph 7 of the Executive agenda report; and

(ii) the Council Tax Exceptional Hardship Policy remains unchanged for 2022/23, and the fund available remain at £80,000.

(b) Planning Applications Committee – 28 October and 11 November 2021

It was moved by Councillor Edward Hawkins, seconded by Councillor Victoria Wheeler, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Applications Committee held on 28 October and 11 November 2021 be received.

(c) Licensing Committee – 20 October 2021

It was moved by Councillor Rodney Bates, seconded by Councillor Valerie White and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 20 October 2021 be received.

(d) Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee – 10 November 2021

It was moved by Councillor Sashi Mylvaganam, seconded by Councillor Valerie White, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 10 November 2021 be received.

(e) Audit and Standards Committee – 22 November 2021

It was moved by Councillor Sashi Mylvaganam, seconded by Councillor Cliff Betton and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Standards Committee held on 22 November 2021 be received and the recommendation therein be adopted as set out below:

8/AS Procurement of External Audit for the Period 2023/24 2027/28

RESOLVED that the Council accepts the invitation from Public Sector Audit Appointments to opt in to the sector led process for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for the five financial years from 1 April 2023.

(f) Joint Staff Consultative Group – 25 November 2021

It was moved by Councillor Graham Tapper, seconded by Councillor Sharon Galliford and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Group held on 25 November 2021 be received.

- (g) External Partnerships Select Committee – 30 November 2021

It was moved by Councillor Morgan Rise, seconded by Councillor David Lewis and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the External Partnerships Select Committee held on 30 November 2021 be received.

52/C Motions

It was moved by Councillor Sharon Galliford and seconded by Councillor Graham Alleway that

“this Council

- (i) believes that:
- a. all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate and Ecological Breakdown; local authorities should not wait for their national governments to change their policies;
 - b. all tiers of local government are well placed to lead the way in reducing carbon emissions and tackling the ecological emergency as they have closer links with their residents;
 - c. having already declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to carbon neutrality by 2030, there is also an ecological emergency;
 - d. the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill needs the full support of local government to highlight the urgency of the twin climate and ecological emergencies;
- (ii) declares an ‘Ecological Emergency’ to accompany the Climate Emergency it has already declared;
- (iii) commits to:
- a. leading by example and promoting the good work it is currently undertaking;
 - b. working with partners and volunteers locally and regionally to drive coordinated leadership and collaborative action to aid the recovery of nature and natural environments and identify areas for greater biodiversity;
 - c. ensuring irreplaceable habitats are protected, the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy is followed and that net biodiversity gain is fully implemented;
 - d. reviewing and implementing a borough-wide Tree Strategy;
 - e. continue to review Surrey Heath’s Green Infrastructure Strategy;

- f. demanding that new developments contribute to increasing biodiversity and ecological improvement
- g. register its support for the CEE Bill with the CEE Bill Alliance;
- h. write an open letter, to be shared through local media; and
- i. write to the Member of Parliament for Surrey Heath to urge him to sign up to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill.”

Having expressed concerns about the duplication of work already being undertaken by the Climate Change Working Group, it was moved by Councillor Edward Hawkins and seconded by Councillor Colin Dougan that the motion be referred to the Climate Change Working Group for discussion. The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

The Council discussed the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill and heard differing views on the merits of the Bill. It was moved by Councillor Colin Dougan and seconded by Councillor Edward Hawkins that the motion be amended by removing (i) d, (iii) g and (iii) i. The amendment was put to the vote and lost. It was subsequently moved by Councillor Alan McClafferty and seconded by Councillor Adrian Page that the motion be amended by removing (iii) g. The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

RESOLVED that this Council

(i) believes that:

- a. all governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of Climate and Ecological Breakdown; local authorities should not wait for their national governments to change their policies;**
- a. all tiers of local government are well placed to lead the way in reducing carbon emissions and tackling the ecological emergency as they have closer links with their residents;**
- b. having already declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to carbon neutrality by 2030, there is also an ecological emergency;**
- c. the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill needs the full support of local government to highlight the urgency of the twin climate and ecological emergencies;**

(i) declares an ‘Ecological Emergency’ to accompany the Climate Emergency it has already declared;

(ii) commits to:

- a. leading by example and promoting the good work it is currently undertaking;**
- b. working with partners and volunteers locally and regionally to drive coordinated leadership and collaborative action to aid the recovery of nature and natural environments and identify areas for greater biodiversity;**

- c. ensuring irreplaceable habitats are protected, the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy is followed and that net biodiversity gain is fully implemented;**
- d. reviewing and implementing a borough-wide Tree Strategy;**
- e. continue to review Surrey Heath's Green Infrastructure Strategy;**
- f. demanding that new developments contribute to increasing biodiversity and ecological improvement**
- g. register its support for the CEE Bill with the CEE Bill Alliance;**
- h. write an open letter, to be shared through local media; and**
- i. write to the Member of Parliament for Surrey Heath to urge him to sign up to support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill."**

Note 1: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.4, a recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion.

The following Members voted in favour of the motion:

Councillors Graham Alleway, Peter Barnett, Rodney Bates, Richard Brooks, Sarah Jane Croke, Tim FitzGerald, Sharon Galliford, Mark Gordon, Emma-Jane McGrath, Charlotte Morley, Sashi Mylvaganam, Morgan Rise, John Skipper, Graham Tapper, Pat Tedder, Victoria Wheeler, Helen Whitcroft, Kristian Wrenn.

The following Members voted against the motion:

Councillors Colin Dougan, David Lewis, Alan McClafferty, Adrian Page, Robin Perry, Darryl Ratiram,

The following Members abstained from voting:

Councillors Stuart Black, Shaun Garrett, Edward Hawkins, Valerie White.

53/C Governance Working Group

The Council received a report detailing the items considered the recent meeting of the Governance Working Group, which included recommendations on updating the following documents:

- (i) Members' Code of Conduct,
- (ii) Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct,
- (iii) Planning Code of Practice for Councillors and Officers,
- (iv) ICT Code of Practice for Members.

The Code of Conduct for Members was considered and it was suggested that a section should be added on the use of Social Media. Members were advised that the Social Media Protocol for Councillors was included in the Documents Which Support the Constitution and the Code of Conduct would apply if the relevant

Member was deemed to be acting as a councillor when participating on social media. It was agreed to ask the Working Group to add the Social Media Protocol to its Work Programme.

Members discussed the proposed changes to the ICT Code of Practice. In addition to rolling out Multi Factor Authentication to further enhanced security when accessing email and data, it was proposed to upgrade existing Microsoft licences to enable access to OneDrive for Business and Office apps for iPad. This had been proposed in response to previous conversations about the lack of digital storage for Members. Concerns were raised about whether, at the present time, Members could meet the requirements in respect of storage proposed in the changes to the Code; it was advised that there were opportunities for emails being stored in sub folders within the email system, which would meet these amended requirements in the Code.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Members' Code of Conduct at Part 5, Section A of the Constitution be updated as set out at Annex A to this report;**
- (ii) the Arrangements for dealing with allegations of misconduct under Section 28 Localism Act 2011 at Part D of the Documents Which Support the Constitution, be updated as set out at Annex B to this report;**
- (iii) the Planning Code of Practice for Councillors and Officers at Part 5, Section D of the Constitution be updated as set out at Annex C to this report; and**
- (iv) the ICT Code of Practice for Members at Part 5, Section C of the Constitution be updated as set out at Annex D to this report.**

Note: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.5, Councillor Victoria Wheeler recorded her vote against the decision.

54/C Leader's Question Time

The Leader undertook to provide a response to a question raised by Councillor Sashi Mylvaganam at recent meetings.

Mayor