

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Performance
and Finance Scrutiny Committee held at
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House,
Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on 5
January 2023**

+ Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam (Chairman)
+ Cllr Valerie White (Vice Chairman)

- Cllr Graham Alleway	+ Cllr Edward Hawkins
+ Cllr Rodney Bates	+ Cllr David Lewis
+ Cllr Stuart Black	+ Cllr Liz Noble
Cllr Vivienne Chapman	- Cllr Darryl Ratiram
Cllr Paul Deach	- Cllr Morgan Rise
+ Cllr Sharon Galliford	+ Cllr Graham Tapper
	* Cllr Helen Whitcroft

+ Present
- Apologies for absence presented
* In attendance virtually

Substitutes: Cllr David Lewis for Cllr Darryl Ratiram
Cllr Graham Tapper for Cllr Morgan Rise

Members in Attendance: Cllr Shaun Garrett, Portfolio Holder: Economic Development & Transformation
Cllr Adrian Page, Portfolio Holder: Planning & Control

Officers Present: Damian Roberts, Chef Executive
Nick Steevens, Strategic Director: Environment & Communities
Bob Watson, Strategic Director, Finance & Customer Services

31/PF Declarations of Interest

Councillor Shaun Garrett declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was the Council's appointed representative on the Board of Collectively Camberley Ltd.

32/PF Call In Meeting Procedure

The Committee noted the procedure that would be followed during the meeting.

33/PF Call In of Executive Decision - Council Contributions to Collectively Camberley Limited

The Committee considered a report setting out a Member Call-in in respect of a decision taken by the Executive on 15th November 2022 to approve recommendations to make additional funding available to Collectively Camberley Limited, the administering body for the Camberley Business Improvement District (BID) outside of the statutorily set BID levy to facilitate the delivery of additional events in Camberley town centre.

The Executive's decision to approve the additional funding had been called in by Councillors Bates, Tapper and Wheeler, who expressed a number of concerns about the proposals including:

- The report contained insufficient evidence to enable an informed decision to be made and no business case had been made to justify the benefits that the proposed events would bring to the Borough.
- No evidence had been provided to show that local businesses were supportive of the proposed events
- The report provided no evidence that partner organisations including the police and the Integrated Care System had been consulted over the proposed events.
- The proposed Christmas Con event appeared to encourage the promotion of unhealthy lifestyles and anti-social behaviour something that went against the Council's agreed priorities

The members who had requested the Call-In indicated that they were in agreement with the Executive's decision to make available an additional £5,000 capital grant to cover the costs of items including safety barriers, gazebos, signage and stage decorations.

It was acknowledged that the BID, through Collectively Camberley, was beneficial to the town and that the events hosted previously by the organisation including the Car Show and Christmas lights switch on did increase footfall in the town centre. Notwithstanding this, no tangible evidence had been presented to support the assumption that an increased footfall on the days events were held had resulted in increased spending in the town centre. Furthermore, it was stressed that any events supported by the Council should be high quality and supported by solid fully costed business cases which set out tangible benefits not only to the town and current businesses and residents but also positively advertised Camberley to prospective tenants as a place that they could envisage doing business in.

It was clarified that the proposed events had been put forward by the BID as part of a larger package of potential events that the Council had been asked to consider sponsoring. The proposed events had been reviewed and the ones that were considered to be most beneficial to the town centre had been put forward for funding.

In respect of the proposed Christmas Con event it was explained that this would be based on similar events that had been held successfully elsewhere in the country and involved a series of linked events and activities including live band performances which would be used to encourage people to visit Camberley town centre in the evening boosting the night-time economy. It was confirmed that the funding would not be used to pay for alcohol.

The Committee was informed that the proposed life sized models would be of a similar standard to the model reindeer and rabbits that were placed round the town centre at Easter and Christmas, which whilst relatively robust were starting to show their age.

The anecdotal comments from retailers and business owners supporting the BID's previous events were noted. However, no evidence had been provided to corroborate the assumption that local businesses and retailers were supportive of the proposed events. The Committee was informed that the BID area covered the whole of Camberley town Centre and that 93% of the businesses within the BID's footprint had voted to support it however it was agreed that the BID would be asked to survey its contributors for their views on events.

It was recognised that the original report to the Executive lacked detail and more holistic information pertaining to the range of benefits that the proposed events would bring to Camberley as well as the cost implications for linked peripheral expenditure for example impacts on parking revenues and the cost of litter clearance and security. In addition, tangible success measures for any proposed events needed to be developed and

included in any business cases so that informed choices could be made about the success, or otherwise, of events.

RESOLVED that the matter be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration and that the following points be made:

- i. That the decision to add a supplementary estimate of £5,000 to the current capital programme to provide a capital grant to Collectively Camberley Limited be progressed.
- ii. That the decision to provide an additional one off grant of £55,000 to Collectively Camberley Limited through a supplementary estimate be deferred to enable detailed business cases to be prepared for each of the proposed events before a final decision was taken on whether each event would receive financial support from the Council.
- iii. That the Police and any other relevant partner agencies in Camberley be consulted on the proposals before they are progressed.

Chairman