

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SURREY
HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL held at
Surrey Heath House, Camberley on
21 February 2024**

+ Cllr Pat Tedder (Mayor)
+ Cllr Sarbie Kang (Deputy Mayor)

+ Cllr Alan Ashbery	+ Cllr Liz Noble
+ Cllr Louise Ashbery	+ Cllr Jacques Olmo
+ Cllr Cliff Betton	+ Cllr David O'Mahoney
+ Cllr Jonny Cope	+ Cllr Ying Perrett
+ Cllr Kel Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr Jonathan Quin
+ Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr Bob Raikes
+ Cllr Shaun Garrett	+ Cllr Morgan Rise
+ Cllr Mary Glauert	+ Cllr Murray Rowlands
+ Cllr Mark Gordon	+ Cllr John Skipper
+ Cllr Julie Hoad	+ Cllr Josh Thorne
+ Cllr Nirmal Kang	+ Cllr Kevin Thompson
+ Cllr Rob Lee	+ Cllr Victoria Wheeler
+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald	- Cllr David Whitcroft
+ Cllr Leanne MacIntyre	+ Cllr Helen Whitcroft
+ Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath	+ Cllr Valerie White
+ Cllr Lewis Mears	+ Cllr Richard Wilson
- Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam	

+ Present
- Apologies for absence presented

50/C Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Sashi Mylvaganam and David Whitcroft.

51/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 13
December 2024 be approved as a correct record.**

52/C Questions from Members of the Public

The Resident & Community Services Portfolio Holder, Councillor Helen Whitcroft, responded to questions from Mrs Chester concerning the impact of increased car parking charges in Camberley Town Centre and potential charges being introduced at Frimley Lodge Park.

The Portfolio Holder also responded to questions from Mrs Fard regarding the impact of reducing free parking in the borough to 30 minutes from an hour, support provided to businesses affected by further parking restrictions, assessment of the

impact on local businesses and potential charges being introduced at Frimley Lodge Park. The Portfolio Holder also undertook to respond to supplementary questions in writing within the next seven days.

53/C Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor referred to the recent death of former councillor and alderman Keith Bush, who had served as a councillor from 1999 until 2015, representing West End ward. He had been Mayor in 2006/07 and a member of the Executive for several years. In 2015, he had been conferred as an Honorary Alderman. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor sent condolences to Alderman Bush's family.

The Mayor also referred to the recent death of former councillor Mrs Pat Pearce, who had represented Heatherside ward between 1995 and 2011. She had been Mayor in 2000/01, then served a second term in 2007/08. The Mayor also conveyed the Council's condolences to Mrs Pearce's family.

The Council observed a minute's silence in their memory.

Members were informed that the Camberley Royal British Legion branch had raised £28,000 for its Poppy Appeal in 2023. Over £1m had been raised across the county of Surrey. The Mayor thanked everyone involved for their contributions.

The Mayor referred to her Civic Service that had not gone ahead in January 2024 and noted with regret the lost opportunity to raise funds for her chosen charity.

Members were updated on the engagements the Mayor had undertaken since the previous meeting, with particular praise extended to the volunteers across the community.

54/C Leader's Announcements

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Shaun Macdonald, referred to the adoption of key documents that month, including a new Council Strategy and the Annual Plan for 2024/25, along with setting the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024//25 -2027/28. He also updated the Council on measures that would be undertaken to secure the Council's financial position.

The Leader updated Members on the progress made in recruiting to the Finance Team and welcomed the new Strategic Finance Manager to the Council. He also congratulated all members of staff that had achieved professional qualifications and long service awards in the previous few months.

Members were reminded that the LGA Peer Review team would be returning to the Council to conduct its follow-up review in April.

All Members were invited to attend the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant on Wednesday, 20 March 2024.

The Leader reported that a programme of activities to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the borough's establishment would be published shortly.

55/C Executive, Committees and Other Bodies

- (a) Executive – 16 January and 13 February 2024

It was moved by Councillor Shaun Macdonald, seconded by Councillor Kel Finan-Cooke, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 16 January and 13 February 2024 be received and the recommendations therein be adopted as set out below:

70/E Electricity Generation from PV on Places Leisure Camberley

RESOLVED that a budget not exceeding the amount stated in the exempt Annex A to the Executive agenda report be agreed for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels at Places Leisure, Camberley.

81/E 43-57 Park Street (the House of Fraser building), Camberley

RESOLVED that a new capital bid of £3.5M be approved to

(i) Undertake enabling works including asbestos removal, and potentially roof repairs or replacement to 43-57 Park Street, Camberley; and

(ii) Progress with further physical surveys, once the asbestos has been removed, and update the plans for the shortlisted options with more robust cost estimates.

- (b) Planning Applications Committee – 21 December 2023 and 25 January 2024

It was moved by Councillor Cliff Betton, seconded by Councillor Victoria Wheeler and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Applications Committee held on 21 December 2023 and 25 January 2024 be received.

- (c) Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee – 15 November 2023 and 24 January 2024

It was moved by Councillor Shaun Garrett, seconded by Councillor Liz Noble and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 15 November 2023 and 24 January 2024 be received.

- (d) External Partnerships Select Committee – 28 November 2023

It was moved by Councillor Rob Lee, seconded by Councillor Mary Glauert and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee held on 28 November 2023 be received.

- (e) Audit and Standards Committee – 14 December 2023

It was moved by Councillor Bob Raikes, seconded by Councillor Shaun Macdonald and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Standards and Risk Committee held on 14 December 2023 be received.

- (f) Employment Committee – 1 February 2024

It was moved by Councillor Shaun Macdonald, seconded by Councillor Lisa Finan-Cooke and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Employment Committee held on 1 February 2024 be received.

- (g) Licensing Committee – 7 February 2024

It was moved by Councillor Valerie White, seconded by Councillor Kel Finan-Cooke and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 7 February 2024 be received.

- (h) Joint Staff Consultative Group – 11 January 2024

It was moved by Councillor Valerie White, seconded by Councillor Lisa Finan-Cooke and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Group held on 11 January 2024 be received.

56/C Annual Revenue Budget 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28

The Council considered a report setting out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 to 2027/28, the revenue budgets estimates for the 2023/24 financial year, the indicative estimates for the period 2024/25 to 2027,28, a 4-year capital strategy and programme, plus the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25

In presenting the budget for 2024/25, the Performance & Finance Portfolio Holder, Councillor Leanne MacIntyre, referred to the financial context and pressures impacting the budget. She referred to the savings already identified in the budget, the proposed use of reserves, along with the increased income and efficiency savings targets of £400,000 that would need to be found in 2024/25. It was reported that the budget included an increase to Council Tax of 2.99% a year on a Band D property.

It was moved by Councillor Leanne MacIntyre and seconded by Councillor Shaun Macdonald that the recommendations as set in the agenda report be approved.

It was moved by Councillor Cliff Betton and seconded by Councillor Liz Noble that the following additional wording be added to the items noted by the Council:

“That several matters remain open, including:

- Externally audited accounts from 2019/20 onwards
- Published draft accounts from 2020/21 onwards

That closure of these items has been influenced by auditing issues nationally, and locally exacerbated including:

- Resource challenges detailed in the Finance Service Stabilisation Review
- Resource challenges within the external audit team

That the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Finance, in conjunction with the Strategic Director, Finance and Customer Service (Chief Finance Officer), will be asked to report back to Executive, prior to the Government back stop date in order to provide assurance on all material balances as of 31st March 2023, including all useable and unusable reserves, of the Council, where relevant, by obtaining external support.”

The amendment was put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, be agreed, comprising:**
 - (a) the Revenue Budget Estimates covering the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 as follows:**
 - i. the 2024/25 budget estimates giving a net cost of services revenue budget for the Council of £17.347 million as shown in Appendix 1 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**
 - ii. to agree the unavoidable service pressures and budget growth of £4.723 million shown in Appendix 1 and in more detail in Appendix 1-1 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**

- iii. to agree the revenue efficiencies of £4.525 million shown in Appendix 1 and in more detail in Appendix 1-2 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- iv. to approve the recommendation by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services (the Council's Section 151 Officer) that a sum of up to £2.500 million of the interest equalisation earmarked reserve be drawn to support the revenue budget over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and provide a sustainable budget for the Council;
- v. that the Surrey Heath Borough Council element of the annual council tax precept be increased by 2.99% across all Council Tax Bands;
- (b) the Capital Strategy, as set out at Appendix 2 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated Capital Programme (appendix 2-1) covering the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 which includes:
 - vi. the new capital bids for £9.539 million in Appendix 2 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 be approved, and that they be incorporated into the Capital Programme;
 - vii. that previous budgets be reprofiled into the 2024/25 to 2027/28 as detailed in Appendix 2-1 amounting to £1.118 million in 2024/25 are approved; and
 - viii. the Prudential Indicators summarised below and explained in Appendix 2 for 2024/25 to 2026/27 in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2011 be approved;

Prudential Indicator	2024/25 Proposed	2025/26 Estimated	2026/27 Estimated	2027/28 Estimated
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Expenditure	10.871	4.292	2.280	2.450
Capital Financing Requirement	209.7	210.2	210.7	211.2
Financing Costs	8.42	8.50	8.52	8.54
Operational Boundary	230	230	230	230
Authorised Limit	237	237	237	237

Ratio of net financing costs to net revenue stream	0.57	0.62	0.61	0.62
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(c) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 shown at Appendix 3, Annex A to the Medium Term Financial Strategy including;

- ix. The Treasury Management Indicators for 2024/25 at Appendix 3, Annex C to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**
- x. The Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement and estimated minimum revenue provision payment table at Appendix 3, Annex F to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**
- xi. the Treasury Management Policy Statement at Appendix 3, Annex G to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**

(d) to note:

- xii. the forecast level of reserve balances shown at Appendix 4 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It should further be noted that these will be subject to confirmation once the outturn position for the current financial year (2023/24) is known and this will be reported in the revenue outturn report early in the new financial year;**
- xiii. the Council Tax base for Surrey Heath Borough Council is 39,749.5 as set in December 2023;**
- xiv. the Medium Term Financial Strategy contains a savings target of £0.600 million over the period of the strategy which will be achieved through a combination of further services efficiencies, increases in income and potentially service reductions to be identified through a output-based budget review for all services of the Council and subject to a base budget review that will commence in the summer of 2024;**
- xv. the statement of the Chief Financial Officer (Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services) on the robustness of estimates and sustainability of balances;**
- xvi. the finance settlement from central Government was finalised through the House of Commons on 7 February 2024;**
- xvii. That several matters remain open, including:**
 - Externally audited accounts from 2019/20 onwards**

- **Published draft accounts from 2020/21 onwards**
- xviii. **That closure of these items has been influenced by auditing issues nationally, and locally exacerbated including:**
- **Resource challenges detailed in the Finance Service Stabilisation Review**
 - **Resource challenges within the external audit team; and**
- xix. **that the Portfolio Holder for Performance and Finance, in conjunction with the Strategic Director, Finance and Customer Service (Chief Finance Officer), will be asked to report back to Executive, prior to the Government back stop date in order to provide assurance on all material balances as of 31st March 2023, including all useable and unusable reserves, of the Council, where relevant, by obtaining external support.**

Note 1: In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, recorded votes were taken.

Voting in favour of the amendment moved by Councillor Cliff Betton and seconded by Councillor Liz Noble:

Councillors Alan Ashbery, Louise Ashbery, Cliff Betton, Kel Finan-Cooke, Lisa Finan-Cooke, Mary Glauert, Julie Hoad, Nirmal Kang, Sarbie Kang, Rob Lee, Shaun Macdonald, Leanne MacIntyre, Liz Noble, Jacques Olmo, David O'Mahoney, Ying Perrett, Jonathan Quin, Bob Raikes, Murray Rowlands, Morgan Rise, John Skipper, Kevin Thompson, Helen Whitcroft, Richard Wilson.

Abstaining from voting on the amendment moved by Councillor Cliff Betton and seconded by Councillor Liz Noble:

Councillors Jonny Cope, Shaun Garrett, Mark Gordon, Emma-Jane McGrath, Lewis Mears, Pat Tedder, Josh Thorne, Victoria Wheeler, Valerie White,

Voting in favour of the substantive motion:

Councillors Alan Ashbery, Louise Ashbery, Cliff Betton, Jonny Cope, Kel Finan-Cooke, Lisa Finan-Cooke, Shaun Garrett, Mary Glauert, Mark Gordon, Julie Hoad, Nirmal Kang, Sarbie Kang, Rob Lee, Shaun Macdonald, Leanne MacIntyre, Emma-Jane McGrath, Lewis Mears, Liz Noble, Jacques Olmo, David O'Mahoney, Ying Perrett, Jonathan Quin, Bob Raikes, Murray Rowlands, Morgan Rise, John Skipper, Pat Tedder, Josh Thorne, Kevin Thompson, Victoria Wheeler, Helen Whitcroft, Valerie White, Richard Wilson.

57/C Setting of Council Tax 2024/25

Having determined its Council Tax Requirement for 2024/25, the Council was now required formally to approve the Council Tax for the area taking into account

precepts received from Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner and the Parishes.

In approving the Council Tax for 2024/25, it was noted that, in December 2023, a Council Tax base of 39,749.5 Band D equivalent properties had been approved for 2024/25, and that precepts for 2024/25 had been received from the Parishes, Surrey County Council and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Council was reminded that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 had received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023. The Act allowed for a council tax premium to be charged for a dwelling occupied periodically. Members were informed that the required guidance from the Secretary of State was still awaited and the Council would be obliged to have regard to this guidance when received. It was recommended that the change be introduced from 1 April 2025 and that the premium introduced would be in line with the guidance produced by the Secretary of State. It was advised that 1 April 2025 was the earliest date the change can be introduced as Billing Authorities were required to give a least one full year's notice from the date the change was adopted.

No changes were proposed for the bandings on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which remained frozen following the increase last year. The Council had now introduced a disregard for war pensions in accordance with its Armed Forces Covenant and following representation from the Royal British Legion (RBL)

It was moved by Councillor Leanne MacIntyre, seconded by Councillor Shaun Macdonald and

RESOLVED

(i) to note that the Council Tax Base for 2024/25 calculated in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

(a) For the whole Council area is 39,749.5 (Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the 'Act)); and

(b) For dwellings in those parts of the area to which a Parish precept relates the following:

Bisley	1,665.23
Chobham	2,085.13
West End	2,427.52
Windlesham	8,376.95

(Being the amounts calculated by the Council in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amount of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which special items relate);

- (ii) that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding parish precepts and special expenses) is £9,851,730**
- (iii) that the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:**
- (a) £52,612,794 being the aggregate for the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31(A)2 of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.**
 - (b) £41,723,774 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.**
 - (c) £10,889,020 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).**
 - (d) £273.94 being the amount at (c) above (Item R), as divided by Item T ((i) (a) above) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);**
 - (e) £1,037,291 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;**
 - (f) £247.85 being the amount at (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by Item T, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount for its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates;**
- (iv) to note that the County Council and Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling as indicated in the Table at paragraph 4(i) and 4(ii) of the agenda report;**
- (v) that the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables at paragraph 4(iii), 4(iv), 4(v) and 4(vi) of the agenda report as the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each category of dwellings;**
- (vi) to note that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is NOT excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as**

the proposed increase is not greater than or equal to 3.00% at Band D; and

- (vii) that, following the Royal Assent of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 the change outlined in paragraphs 7.1 to 7.4 of the agenda report be adopted to be introduced from 1 April 2025 and that the premium introduced be in line with the guidance produced by the Secretary of State.**

Note: In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken.

Voting in favour of the motion:

Councillors Alan Ashbery, Louise Ashbery, Cliff Betton, Jonny Cope, Kel Finan-Cooke, Lisa Finan-Cooke, Shaun Garrett, Mary Glauert, Mark Gordon, Julie Hoad, Nirmal Kang, Sarbie Kang, Rob Lee, Shaun Macdonald, Leanne MacIntyre, Emma-Jane McGrath, Lewis Mears, Liz Noble, Jacques Olmo, David O'Mahoney, Ying Perrett, Jonathan Quin, Bob Raikes, Murray Rowlands, Morgan Rise, John Skipper, Pat Tedder, Josh Thorne, Kevin Thompson, Victoria Wheeler, Helen Whitcroft, Valerie White, Richard Wilson.

58/C Petition - Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order

Councillor Jonny Cope presented a petition asking the Council to review a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) for Wellington Park. The petition asked the Council to:

“Urgently review the existing TPO 11/86 and consider the benefits of replacing it with an Area TPO that allows for the proper maintenance of foliage and other plants growing beneath the canopies of trees covered by the existing TPO. Within six months to carry out a survey of trees on the entire estate, identifying those which would benefit from a Specific TPO rather than a blanket one to ensure that those trees providing substantial amenity to the estate are protected by TPOs.”

Councillor Cope highlighted that he had held a public meeting in summer 2023, that had been attended by around 80 people, Glendale and the Council's Greenspace team.

Members summarised their own meetings and discussions with residents regarding tree concerns and TPOs across the borough. The importance of preserving trees in special character areas and biodiversity net gain was also recognised. Members also queried if a more up-to-date list of TPOs was required and the training and knowledge council officers received and relayed to residents on TPOs.

It was moved by Councillor Richard Wilson and seconded by Councillor Alan Ashbery that

“this Council:

- (i) recognises the residents’ concerns raised through the petition, in management of trees in their area and under these restrictions;
- (ii) values the diversity and vibrancy of our arboreal environment within Surrey Heath that helps make it a unique place to live;
- (iii) supports the principle of appropriate regulation to preserve that uniqueness for future generations;
- (iv) notes the complexity and potential cost exposure for the Council of the topic, as detailed in the Chief Executive’s supplementary report;
- (v) recommends support in principle for the actions the Chief Executive recommends;
- (vi) delegates to the Head of Planning, in alignment with Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Transport & Planning, to bring forward an updated Task & Finish Group terms of reference for approval at March’s Executive;
- (vii) ensures through alignment with Group Leaders and their councillor’s interest in this topic, the group’s membership be broadly based and ideally led by someone outside the Executive;
- (viii) requests that the Task and Finish Group report back to the Executive, with recommendations, in June 2024; and
- (ix) suggests that the resident’s area that raised this petition be the pilot area for implementation of any recommendations before wider borough cascade.”

An amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Jonathan Quin and seconded by Councillor Victoria Wheeler that proposed to include the following additional wording:

“(x) To review the guidance relied on by the Council’s professional officers and processes for the guidance that constitutes advice given in relation to and including special character areas.”

As the mover of the original motion, Councillor Richard Wilson, accepted the amendment it was agreed without a vote.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the residents’ concerns raised through the petition, in management of trees in their area and under these restrictions be recognised;**
- (ii) the diversity and vibrancy of our arboreal environment within Surrey Heath that helps make it a unique place to live be supported;**

- (iii) the principle of appropriate regulation to preserve that uniqueness for future generations be supported;**
- (iv) the complexity and potential cost exposure for the Council of the topic, as detailed in the Chief Executive's supplementary report be noted;**
- (v) support be agreed in principle for the actions recommended by the Chief Executive;**
- (vi) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, in alignment with Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Transport & Planning, to bring forward an updated Task & Finish Group terms of reference for approval at March's Executive;**
- (vii) through alignment with Group Leaders and their councillor's interest in this topic, the group's membership be broadly based and ideally led by someone outside the Executive;**
- (viii) the Task and Finish Group be asked report back to the Executive, with recommendations, in June 2024;**
- (ix) the resident's area that raised this petition be the pilot area for implementation of any recommendations before wider borough cascade; and**
- (x) the guidance relied on by the Council's professional officers and processes for the guidance that constitutes advice given in relation to and including special character areas be reviewed.**

59/C Members' Allowances - Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

The Local Government Act 2000 required all local authorities to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) to advise on the terms and conditions of their Scheme of Councillors' Allowances. The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended and the Guidance on Consolidated Regulations for Local Authorities, determined how the Panels were to operate. A Members Allowances Scheme could apply for up to 4 years and indexed to the Retail Price Index (RPI), the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or another formula, for example in line with staff pay awards. Members' allowances had previously been reviewed in 2020. At that time it had been agreed that allowances would be reviewed again in 2024.

The IRP had met on 23 and 24 January 2024 and had been comprised as follows:

- Lucy Brown – Chief Executive, Disability Initiative
- Mark Palmer – Development Director, South East Employers (Chair)
- Mark Selby – Director, Project Beyond Consortium

The Council received the report of the IRP in relation to the proposed Council's Members' Allowance Scheme. A separate report would be sent to Parish Councils on the IRP's recommendations on Members' allowances for those councils.

The Council had to have regard to the IRP's report when making a new Allowance Scheme, but did not have to agree with all or any of the elements thereof.

The Panel had adopted the same approach to calculating allowances as its previous review in 2020, namely applying a formula to calculate the basic allowance and the tiered approach taken in respect of calculating Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA). There had been changes proposed to the tiered approach, with the inclusion of Tier 6 SRA for some charring roles. Members also noted the IRP's recommendation that the maximum number of SRAs at any one time should not exceed 50% of Council Members. The report also proposed that no councillor be entitled to receive at any time more than one SRA.

It was proposed by Councillor Shaun Macdonald and seconded by Councillor Shaun Garrett that (xii) of the recommendation be amended by replacing the proposal not to pay group leaders with less than 10% of the Council's membership a SRA, with a SRA equivalent to 50% of the Political Group Leaders with 10% or more of the Council's membership's SRA, equating to £2,655 per annum per role. The amendment was put to the vote and carried.

The recommendation, as amended, was subsequently put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED that

- (i) a basic allowance of £5,834 per annum for all Members be agreed;**
- (ii) no councillor be entitled to receive at any time more than one Special Responsibility Allowance;**
- (iii) the maximum number of Members receiving a Special Responsibility Allowances payable at any one time does not exceed 50% of Council Members, equivalent to 17 Members;**
- (iv) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 260% of the basic allowance be paid to the Leader as a Tier 1 role, equating to £15,168 per annum;**
- (v) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader as a Tier 2 role, equating to £7,584 per annum;**
- (vi) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 40% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to all Tier 3 roles, namely the Mayor and members of the Executive, equating to £6,067 per annum per role;**
- (vii) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 35% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to all Tier 4 roles, namely the**

Chair of Planning Applications Committee and Political Group Leaders with 10% or more of the Council's membership, equating to £5,309 per annum per role;

- (viii) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 30% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to all Tier 5 roles, namely the Chair of Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee and the Chair of Audit, Standards and Risk Committee, equating to £4,550 per annum per role;**
- (ix) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 25% of the Leader's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to all Tier 6 roles, namely the Chair of External Partnerships Select Committee, the Chair of Licensing Committee, and the Chair of the Employment Committee, equating to £3,792 per annum per role;**
- (x) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 30% of the Mayor's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Deputy Mayor, equating to £1,820 per annum;**
- (xi) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 40% of the Chair of Planning Application Committee's Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Vice Chair of the Planning Applications Committee, equating to £2,123 per annum;**
- (xii) a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the Political Group Leaders with 10% or more of the Council's membership, be paid to the Political Group Leaders with less than 10% of the Council's membership, equating to £2,655 per annum per role;**
- (xiii) car and motorcycle mileage payments be at the maximum rate per mile that can be paid tax-free as defined by HM Revenue and Customs or the rate for officers, whichever is the lower;**
- (xiv) the amounts payable in respect of taxi travel, travel by air and European Travel, and the terms and conditions of those payments, be as those set for officers of the Council;**
- (xv) eligibility for Travel and Subsistence Allowances continue to be payable to councillors and any co-opted members in connection with any Approved Councillor Duties;**
- (xvi) dependant carer's allowances be paid as follows:**
 - a. Childcare – Up to £13.00 per hour, with no monthly maximum claim;**
 - b. Specialist Care – based on cost, subject to the production of receipts and evidence that this type of care is required;**

- (xvii) eligibility for Dependants' Carers' Allowances continue to be payable to councillors and any co-opted members in connection with any Approved Councillor Duties;
- (xviii) the Panel's recommendation that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance should be actively promoted to prospective and new councillors be endorsed;
- (xix) the parental leave policy for councillors set out in the existing Members' Allowances Scheme be continued;
- (xx) The basic allowance, Special Responsibility Allowances and the Dependants' Carers Allowances (Childcare) be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries until 2028, at which time the Scheme be reviewed again by an Independent Remuneration Panel; and
- (xxi) The new scheme of allowances be implemented with effect from the beginning of the 2024/25 financial year, at which time the current scheme will be revoked.

60/C Council Strategy

The Council considered a new Council Strategy for 2024-2028, which had been recommended for agreement by the Executive at its meeting on 13 February 2024, having previously been reviewed by the Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee. The five priorities identified in the new draft Strategy were:

- Protect our Environment
- Promote Healthier and More Inclusive Communities
- Support a Strong Economy and Create More Homes
- Campaign for Residents
- Deliver Effective Services with Sustainable Finances

It was moved by Councillor Shaun Macdonald, seconded by Councillor Morgan Rise and

RESOLVED that the new Council Strategy 2024 – 2028, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report be adopted.

61/C Governance Working Group

The Council was informed that the Governance Working Group had discussed the current procedures for the Mayor or Chairs of committees to exercise a casting vote in the event that a vote was tied. Currently, if a vote was tied the Mayor would be required to exercise a casting vote in favour of the status quo. This was replicated for committee chairs, with the exception of the Chair of Planning Applications Committee.

The Working Group had proposed that the procedure rules were amended to allow the Mayor or Chair to have a free vote when exercising a casting vote. The rules

would also be updated to require a further debate and vote, with the casting vote only exercised if after the second vote an equality of votes remained. In addition, guidance would be added to the Constitution for the Mayor or Chair to take into account when exercising a casting vote.

The Council was informed that a Task & Finish Group had been formed to review the Council's governance arrangements and the principles that had informed the review were noted. One of the central principles was that there should not be any increase to the cost of operating any revised arrangements.

The Working Group had endorsed the Task & Finish Group recommendations not to make a formal change to governance arrangements at this time. Alternatively it was proposing to make changes that met the objectives of the review, within the parameters of the existing executive and scrutiny system, with an emphasis on a need for more pre-decision scrutiny. It was therefore proposed to adopt a framework that reflected the following principles:

- The Leader is advised to reduce the number of portfolios to six;
- The Executive reviews the scope of the Executive Working Groups, including potentially aligning them to portfolios; and
- Executive Working Groups operate more like Task & Finish Groups where appropriate, with the remit to meet in response to items as they arose, rather than as part of a fixed schedule of meetings.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Council Procedure Rules at Part 4, Section A of the Constitution be updated as set out at Annex A to the agenda report;**
- (ii) the Committees, Sub Committees and Other Bodies Procedure Rules at Part 4, Section D of the Constitution be updated as set out at Annex B to the agenda report; and**
- (iii) the recommendations to the Leader and Executive concerning the changes to the size of the Executive and the revised approach for Executive Working Groups be noted.**

62/C Questions from Councillors

The Leisure & Culture Portfolio Holder, Councillor John Skipper, responded to a question from Councillor Murray Rowlands concerning the absence of arts and culture in the priorities of the council; he noted that an Art, Culture and Heritage Strategy was to be developed from 2024 onwards.

The Leisure & Culture Portfolio Holder, Councillor John Skipper, responded to a second question from Councillor Murray Rowlands concerning the increase of hire charges for space at Camberley Theatre; he noted that the charges were not being increased and that the Council was committed to contributing positively to the cultural life of the borough.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Shaun Macdonald, responded to questions under Council Procedure Rule 11A:

- (i) Councillor Macdonald agreed with Councillor Shaun Garrett that administrations past and present should accept accountability for the decisions they had made;
- (ii) In response to a question from Councillor Lewis Mears, the Leader deferred to the Sustainable Transport & Planning Portfolio Holder, Councillor Alan Ashbery; who recognised that sites for the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Community were actively being sought across the borough;
- (iii) Councillor Macdonald replied to Councillor Jonathan Quin about the demolition of derelict buildings owned by the council on London Road, advising that he would provide an update at a later date following the upcoming Regeneration Plan briefing;
- (iv) In response to questions from Councillor Victoria Wheeler and Councillor Valerie White, it was confirmed that the implementation of the parking strategy would be subject to continuous review and this would be data led as much as possible;
- (v) Following a question from Councillor Rob Lee, it was confirmed that the Council could invite a representative from Windlesham Parish Council to a meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee to discuss its 2024/25 precept increase;
- (vi) Councillor Shaun Garrett asked a question, noting internet outages affecting local businesses allegedly due to work being conducted on the roof of House of Frasier. The Leader was unaware of such work and would investigate further;
- (vii) In response to a question from Councillor Murray Rowlands, the vacant shops in Camberley Town Centre were acknowledged, but recognised that seasonal pressures and a tough retail market were a consideration. The Leader also highlighted the work of officers to encourage economic development in the borough; and
- (viii) The Leader agreed with Councillor Victoria Wheeler that local people are best placed to tackle local issues.

Mayor