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Monday, 11 March 2024

To: The Members of the **EXECUTIVE**  
(Councillors: Shaun Macdonald (Chair), Alan Ashbery, Kel Finan-Cooke, Lisa Finan-Cooke, Leanne MacIntyre, Morgan Rise, John Skipper and Helen Whitcroft)

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** will be held at Surrey Heath House and [www.youtube.com/user/SurreyHeathBC](http://www.youtube.com/user/SurreyHeathBC) on Tuesday, 19 March 2024 at 6.30 pm. The agenda will be set out as below.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Yours sincerely

Damian Roberts

Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

Pages

### Part 1 (Public)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

3 - 12

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2024 (copy attached).

3. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are invited to declare any interests they may have with respect to matters which are to be considered at this meeting. Members who consider they may have an interest are invited to consult the Monitoring Officer or the Democratic Services Officer prior to the meeting.

4. **Public Question Time**

To answer any questions received in accordance with Part 4, Section E of the Constitution.

**5. Questions by Members**

The Leader and Portfolio Holders to receive and respond to questions from Members on any matter which relates to an Executive function in accordance with Part 4 of the Constitution, Section B Executive Procedure Rules, Paragraph 16.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Local Development Scheme</b>	<b>13 - 30</b>
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<b>10.</b>	<b>Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference for the Petition review of Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order (TPO)</b>	<b>51 - 66</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3</b>	<b>67 - 78</b>
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**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive  
held on 13 February 2024**

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+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald (Chair)

* Cllr Alan Ashbery	+ Cllr Morgan Rise
+ Cllr Kel Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr John Skipper
+ Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr Helen Whitcroft
+ Cllr Leanne MacIntyre	

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

\* In attendance virtually but did not vote

In Attendance: Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Jonny Cope, Cllr Shaun Garrett, Cllr Mary Glauert, Cllr Julie Hoad, Cllr Nirmal Kang, Cllr Sarbie Kang, Cllr Rob Lee, Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath, Cllr Lewis Mears, Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam, Cllr Liz Noble, Cllr David O'Mahoney, Cllr Murray Rowlands, Cllr Pat Tedder, Cllr Kevin Thompson, Cllr David Whitcroft, Cllr Valerie White and Cllr Richard Wilson

**71/E Moment of Silence**

A minute's silence was held in memory of residents of the borough affected by a fatal car accident earlier that week.

**72/E Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**73/E Questions by Members**

The Inclusion & Housing Portfolio Holder, Councillor Lisa Finan-Cooke, responded to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson confirming the Council's support for transgender residents of the borough in light of the recent release of information concerning the murder of Brianna Ghey. She also extended the Council's sympathies to Brianna's family.

Councillor Alan Ashbery, the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Transport & Planning, responded to a question from Councillor Shaun Garrett about the potential for accidents to be caused due to bad parking near the shops in Old Dean. It was advised that contacts would be made at both Member and Officer levels to ask Surrey County Council to increase parking enforcement patrols in the area.

In response to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson about replacing the playground at Whitmoor Road, Bagshot, the Leisure & Culture Portfolio Holder, Councillor John Skipper, informed Members that this Council would proceed with a replacement play park once the necessary processes with Surrey County Council were complete.

Following a question from Councillor Shaun Garrett, the borough's recycling figures were noted and thanks were extended to those who had been involved in helping the targets to be achieved.

The Net Zero, Wellbeing & Environment Portfolio Holder, Councillor Morgan Rise, responded to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson by updating the meeting on enforcement of fly tipping.

#### **74/E Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The Executive considered a report setting out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the revenue budgets estimates for the 2024/25 financial year, and the indicative estimates for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28. The MTFS also incorporated a 4-year capital strategy and programme, plus a Treasury Management Strategy. It was noted that the budget reflected a proposal for the Council's element of the annual council tax precept to be increased by 2.99% across all Council Tax Bands.

Members were reminded that, over the past few years the Council had applied some of its reserve balances to support regeneration and delivery of services to the local residents and businesses; however, this was not sustainable in perpetuity and as such the MTFS contained a savings and efficiencies target to balance the budget by keeping within the financing resources available. These targets would be met from a combination of further service efficiencies, looking at ways of increasing income, and potential non-statutory service reductions.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated Revenue Budget Estimates covering the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 as set out at the updated Annex A to the agenda report and its appendices, be agreed, including:**

- (i) approving the Revenue Budget Estimates covering the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 by:**
  - a. agreeing 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;**
  - b. agreeing 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;**
  - c. agreeing 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;**
  - d. approving 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;

- e. agreeing that the Surrey Heath Borough Council element of the annual council tax precept be increased by 2.99% across all Council Tax Bands;
- (ii) agreeing 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, including:
- f. agreeing 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;
  - g. reprofiling previous budgets into 2024/25 to 2027/28 as detailed in Appendix 2-1 amounting to £1.118 million in 2024/25;
  - h. approving 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:

<b>Prudential Indicator</b>	<b>2024/25 Proposed £m</b>	<b>2025/26 Estimated £m</b>	<b>2026/27 Estimated £m</b>	<b>2027/28 Estimated £m</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>10.871</b>	<b>4.292</b>	<b>2.280</b>	<b>2.450</b>
<b>Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>209.7</b>	<b>210.2</b>	<b>210.7</b>	<b>211.2</b>
<b>Ratio of net financing costs to net revenue stream</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>0.61</b>	<b>0.62</b>
<b>Financing Costs</b>	<b>8.42</b>	<b>8.50</b>	<b>8.52</b>	<b>8.54</b>
<b>Operational Boundary</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>Authorised Limit</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>237</b>

- (iii) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 shown at Appendix 3, Annex A to the Medium Term Financial Strategy be agreed, including;

- i. the Treasury Management Indicators for 2024/25 at Appendix 3, Annex C to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;

- j. the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement and estimated minimum revenue provision payment table at Appendix 3, Annex F to the Medium Term Financial Strategy; and**
- k. the Treasury Management Policy Statement at Appendix 3, Annex G to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.**

**RESOLVED to note:**

- (i) 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;**
- (ii) the Council Tax base for Surrey Heath Borough Council is 39,749.5 as set at the Executive meeting on 5 December 2023;**
- (iii) 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; and**
- (iv) the statement of the Chief Financial Officer (Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services) on the robustness of estimates and sustainability of balances; and**
- (v) the finance settlement from the Government was finalised through the House of Commons on 5 February 2024.**

Note: it was noted for the record that,

- (i) in relation to the capital grants set out in the Capital Programme, Councillor Shaun Garrett declared that he was a member of the Old Dean Bowling Club; and**
- (ii) in relation to funding for clubs and bodies, Councillor Murray Rowlands declared that he was an Executive member of Camberley Job Club.**

## **75/E Council Strategy**

The Executive considered a new draft Council Strategy for 2024 – 2028. The Strategy sought to build on the objectives in the previous Five Year Strategy.

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

The Strategy would be delivered each year through a set of more detailed actions and targets agreed in the Annual Plan.

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Council Strategy 2024 – 2028 at Annex A to the agenda report be adopted.**

#### **76/E Draft Annual Plan 2024/25**

The Executive considered the proposed Annual Plan for 2024/25, which set out the key projects and performance indicator targets for the next financial year. The Annual Plan was the main delivery vehicle for ensuring that the ambitions in the Council's overarching strategy are delivered for residents and the borough. The draft plan had been considered by the Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in January and its comments had been incorporated.

**RESOLVED that the Annual Plan for 2024/25, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, be agreed, subject to the approval of the annual budget 2024/25 at Full Council on 21 February 2024.**

#### **77/E Parking Strategy**

The Executive was reminded that, in September 2023 it had determined that prior to any commitment to increase parking tariffs, a Car Parking Strategy would be developed to set out the Council's aspirations for its car parks and determine where improvements could be made to enhance customer experience. The Parking Strategy was intended to bring about a more strategic and rounded review of the Council's car parks looking at income, tariff structures, levels of usage, future technology, maintenance and required levels of future investment.

Members were informed that one of the core principles of the Strategy was that across the borough as a whole, the portfolio of car parks should be financially sustainable, therefore self-funding and avoiding the need for Council subsidy. Changes to the tariffs were intended to fund the investment required to address any necessary maintenance and introduce Preventative Planned Maintenance plans. In addition, the Strategy set out plans for safer, cleaner, car parks with better signage and marking and easier contactless payments.

The schedule of proposed changes to tariffs was noted, including a reduction from one hour to 30 minutes free parking in Pay on Foot car parks, excluding Chobham due to it providing parking for Chobham Water Meadows Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. It was also proposed to introduce car parking tariffs in Wilton Road car park.

The Strategy had been considered by the Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee in January 2024 and the revisions made following the meeting, including correcting inconsistency regarding Sunday charges, were noted.

Members discussed the proposals and the results of the consultation that had been conducted. It was noted that two petitions concerning elements of the Strategy had recently been made live for signing on the Council's website. Feedback reported by residents was also shared, including concerns about the impact of the proposed reduction to 30 minutes free parking in pay on foot car parks.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) the Parking Strategy, as set out in Annex 1 to the agenda report, be adopted;**
- (ii) the amendments to the parking tariffs for existing car parks, as set out in page 25 of Annex 1 to the agenda report, be approved with effect from 1st April 2024;**
- (iii) the proposed introduction of car parking tariffs in Wilton Road car park be introduced from 1st July 2024 following the completion of the statutory Traffic Regulatory Order process and after review and consideration of any feedback received; and**
- (iv) the final implementation of these proposals be delegated to the Strategic Director for Environment and Community in consultation with the Resident & Community Services Portfolio Holder, following the completion of the necessary statutory processes.**

**78/E Review of Grant Schemes**

The Executive was reminded that, at its meeting on 16 January 2024, it had agreed to award several revenue grants, along with transitional funding to end the provision of two revenue grants, for a range of organisations, based on proposed changes to the Ward Councillor Grant and Community Fund Grant being approved at a future date.

Members considered a report containing proposals to review and amend the criteria of the Council's Lottery Grant, Ward Councillor Grant, and Community Fund Grant. It was noted that the Ward Councillor Grant Scheme budget would be reduced from £52,500 to £35,000 per annum, with the £17,500 reallocated to support the annual Revenue Grants. As a result, each councillor would have £1,000 per year to allocate in line with the Scheme.

**RESOLVED that the grant policy and criteria of the three grant schemes be amended as set out at paragraph 2 of the agenda report.**



## **79/E Review of Planning Services Fee Charges 2024/25**

The Executive considered a report setting out proposed increases to fees for the Planning and Building Control services. The proposals included continuing the fast-track planning application service and expanding it to include minor developments. It also introduced fees for general enquiries and administrative fees for paper handling and invalid applications. New Building Control administrative fees would be introduced for archive records, Demolition Notices and Exempt Building Work Certificates. These changes would be applied from 1 April 2024.

Members were advised that the changes had been proposed to ensure that the department continued to deliver the best possible customer service with clear expectations for the public. Income generation as a result of these changes would enable the service to reinvest the resource and support the wider council objectives.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- (i) The pre-application charging schedule be increased by 25% for non-major proposals and 35% for major proposals and takes effect from 1 April 2024;**
- (ii) The existing fast-track planning application service continues and, subject to piloting, from 1 April 2024 is expanded to include minor developments;**
- (iii) General enquiries fees and administrative fees for paper handling and invalid planning applications be introduced and take effect from 1 April 2024;**
- (iv) Planning performance agreements are standardised and better promoted with a clear fee structure, template agreement and improved web content;**
- (v) Building Control fees be increased by 53% to take effect from 1 April 2024; and**
- (vi) Building Control administrative fees are introduced for archive records, Demolition Notices and Exempt Building Work Certificates.**

## **80/E ANPR Procurement**

The Executive was informed that the current automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) car park control and management system for Main Square and Knoll Road car parks had been installed on 2 June 2014, with a maximum contract for maintenance and software support of 10 years. A procurement exercise had been undertaken to procure a new system and approval was sought to award the Car Park Management System contract to the successful tenderer.

### **RESOLVED that**

- (i) the issue of intention to award the contract to tenderer 2 for a period of ten years commencing on 3 June 2024 with the option for the council to extend for a further two years be approved; and**
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Strategic Director for Environment and Community in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resident & Community Services to award the contract following the 10-day statutory standstill period.**

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

The Executive considered a report seeking approval to progress the removal of asbestos in the former House of Fraser building at 43-57 Park Street, Camberley, which was owned by the Council.

It was advised that the removal of asbestos by specialist contractors would be required regardless of the future use of the building. Furthermore, the assessment of the future use of the building was inhibited by the presence of asbestos as surveyors would not undertake detailed building condition, mechanical and electrical and measured surveys until it had been removed due to the health and safety risk. Therefore, in order to present more robust costs associated with different options for future use of the building, the removal of asbestos and undertaking of the surveys was necessary.

The proposed works comprised the removal of asbestos from all vacant areas and the potential selective repair or full replacement of the roof. A decision on whether to replace the roof would be made once the asbestos had been removed, survey work undertaken on its condition, and financial analysis of the selected options updated.

**RESOLVED that, subject to the agreement of the budget by the Full Council**

- (i) authority be delegated to the Head of Property and Economic Development in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Finance and the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services (Chief Finance Officer) to:**
  - a) enter into a contract for the necessary work to remove asbestos from 43-57 Park Street, Camberley, and necessary associated works, including contract award for the procured supplier;**
  - b) Following removal of the asbestos, instruct appropriate physical survey and assessment of the roof and other areas to enable procurement of updated cost plans for the re-use of the building;**
  - c) As deemed appropriate following detailed surveys and cost estimations, instruct the appropriate repair and replacement**

**works to keep the building wind and watertight, particularly the roof;**

**d) Control the release of all contingency amounts allocated to the project; and**

**(ii) officers report back to the Executive on the proposed future use of the building, once the asbestos has been removed and survey work undertaken allowing assessment, with more accurate cost estimates for the feasible options for the re-use of the building.**

**RECOMMENDED to Full Council 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.**

Chair

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**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Executive**  
**19<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

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**Surrey Heath Local Development Scheme 2024 – 2027**

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Alan Ashbery – Sustainable Transport & Planning
<b>Strategic Director/Head of Service</b>	Bob Watson / Gavin Chinniah
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jane Reeves – Planning Policy and Conservation Manager
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report</b>	22/02/24
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All

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**Summary and purpose**

Local Authorities are required to produce, and keep up to date, a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the future planning documents the Council will be producing within a three-year period and the timescales and key milestones for their preparation. The Council last published an LDS in March 2023, covering the period to 2026. The Secretary of State can intervene to put an LDS in place where the current one is out of date.

The proposed LDS attached at Annex 1 focuses on the preparation of the new Surrey Heath Local Plan. It sets out the milestones and timescales to adoption in 2025 and will replace the current LDS. Publication of the Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Local Plan is scheduled for Summer 2024 (starting in early July and ending in August). The purpose of this report is to seek Executive agreement to the revised Local Plan preparation timetable, following the decision to delay publication of the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

The key stages and dates for preparation are set out in the following table:

<b>Local Plan preparation Stage</b>	<b>Date</b>
Consultation on Issues and Preferred Options	June - July 2018
Consultation on a Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18)	March – May 2022
Consultation on Regulation 18 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople additional site allocations	August – September 2022

Publication of a Pre-Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)	Summer 2024 (previous date November 2023 – January 2024)
Submission to the Secretary of State for Examination	Winter 2024/2025 (previous date April 2024)
Adoption	Autumn 2025 (previous date February 2025)

## **Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that:

- (i) The Surrey Heath Local Development Scheme (LDS) attached at Annex 1, covering the period 2024 – 2027 be agreed and published on the website.

### **1. Background and Supporting Information**

- 1.1 The new Surrey Heath Local Plan, once adopted, will replace current planning policies in the saved Local Plan (2000), the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document and the Camberley Town Centre Area Action Plan. It will provide a robust and up-to-date planning framework for future development in the Borough.
- 1.2 The current LDS set out that Publication of a Regulation 19 Local Plan would take place in November 2023. In Summer 2023, it became clear that the approach to the town centre sites at London Road Block and Land East of Knoll Road, which are a key part of the future spatial strategy for the Borough, needed to be revisited. Further masterplanning and viability work needed to be undertaken to ensure that the level of development being proposed through the Local Plan was robust and supported by up-to-date evidence. This followed developer feedback and significant changes to costs and commitments in building higher rise development. In September 2023, the Council published a statement setting out the need for a delay.

### **2. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 The LDS focus is on the production of the new Surrey Heath Local Plan 2019 - 2038.
- 2.2 Consultation on a Regulation 18 Local Plan took place in March to May 2022, with a further consultation on Additional Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople site allocations in August to September 2022. The revised LDS timetable reflects the delay to the publication of the Regulation 19 Local Plan (essentially the Council's final version of the Plan that it wants to submit for Examination), and subsequent changes to the remainder of the timetable.

- 2.3 Adoption of the Plan is now anticipated in Autumn 2025, but this will depend on Planning Inspectorate resources, which will impact on the timing of the Examination process and the receipt of the Inspectors Report.
- 2.4 The LDS also sets out that the detail and timetable of any supplementary planning guidance that is prepared to support implementation of the Local Plan policies will be placed on the Council's website.
- 2.5 A revised Local Plan timetable was considered and supported by the Local Plan Working Group on 23 January 2024.

### **Changes to National Planning Policy and Legislation**

- 2.6 Since the last LDS was published a number of changes to national planning policy and to planning legislation have taken place including the enactment of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) in October 2023 and the publication of revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework in December 2023.
- 2.7 Plan making reforms in the LURA will require secondary legislation to be formally introduced. A consultation on implementing the plan making elements of the LURA, was carried out by Government in Summer 2023. The transitional arrangements set out in that suggest that the proposed changes will not affect the preparation of the current new Local Plan provided that the following key dates are met:
- The Local Plan is submitted for Examination by 30 June 2025
- The Local Plan is adopted by 31 December 2026
- 2.8 The revised timetable is within these deadlines. It should also be noted that under changes that can be enacted through the LURA, new Supplementary Planning Documents would no longer be able to be produced, although existing ones would still carry weight until a Local Plan is prepared under the new planning system. There is currently no timetable for when further regulations might be introduced that would prevent new Supplementary Planning Documents being prepared.
- 2.9 Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework published in December 2023 will need to be taken into account in the wording of the Local Plan policies and supporting text.

### **3. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The available options for the Executive to consider are:
- i. To approve the LDS as set out in Annex 1 of this Report; or
  - ii. To approve the LDS as set out in Annex 1 of this report with changes; or
  - iii. To not agree the LDS as set out in Annex 1 of this Report.

#### **4. Contribution to the Council Strategy 2024 - 2028**

- 4.1 The LDS sets out a timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan which once produced will help to deliver on the following themes:

**Protect our Environment** –drive to net zero; protect and enhance our natural environment and increase local biodiversity.

**Promote healthier & more inclusive communities** –promote health and well-being.

**Support a Strong Economy and create more homes** – help create more homes to meet local needs; stimulate regeneration of Camberley; support vibrant villages and local centres and create a consensus driven Local Plan.

**Campaign for Residents** – promote sustainable travel options.

#### **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 There are resource implications arising from the production of the Local Plan, which are primarily covered by agreed budgets. The specific additional budgetary implications are outlined in section 6.1 below. Resources will be needed in the following two financial years to deliver the Local Plan and produce supporting guidance and design codes. These future resource implications are expected to be covered by existing budgets and will be agreed through the usual budget setting process.

#### **6. Section 151 Officer Comments**

- 6.1 The budgetary implications of this report relate to the need to agree carry forwards to pay for the production of supporting Local Plan evidence and legal advice, previously scheduled for completion during the current financial year, but which will now be delayed into 2024/25.
- 6.2 Further budget implications arise from a growth item to cover the cost of the appointment of an independent inspector from the Planning Inspectorate to undertake the Local Plan Examination. This growth item was approved by Executive in February as part of the 2024/25 budget.

#### **7. Legal and Governance Issues**

- 7.1 The preparation of a Local Development Scheme and Local Plan are statutory requirements of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Local Plan must be prepared in line with relevant legislation as well as having regard to national planning policy and guidance.

#### **8. Monitoring Officer Comments**

- 8.1 No matters arising.

#### **9. Other Considerations and Impacts**

- 9.1 None.



## **Environment and Climate Change**

- 9.1 The LDS sets out a timetable for the production of the Local Plan and in itself does not give rise to any impact upon environmental matters or climate change.

## **Equalities and Human Rights**

- 9.2 An equalities Impact Assessment will be prepared for the Local Plan.

## **Risk Management**

- 9.3 The LDS (attached as Annex 1) identifies the risks to meeting the Local Plan milestones and sets out some mitigation to each risk.
- 9.4 The exact detail of the some of the changes proposed through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act are not yet available and will need to be monitored as the plan progresses.

## **Community Engagement**

- 9.5 The LDS sets out the stages at which the Local Plan will be subject to consultation, which is focused at Regulation 18 stage. Significant public engagement was undertaken at this stage and comments received inform the content of the Local Plan which will be published at Regulation 19 stage.

## **Annexes**

Annex 1: Draft Local Development Scheme 2024 - 2027

## **Background Papers**

None.

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# Surrey Heath Local Development Scheme 2024-2027



March 2024

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Knoll Road, Camberley GU15 3HD

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out Surrey Heath Borough Council's programme for preparing a new Local Plan<sup>1</sup>. It outlines the Local Plan content and a timetable for each stage of the Local Plan preparation. The LDS also identifies other documents that are to be prepared by the Council to support the Local Plan.
- 1.2. This Local Development Scheme covers the time period 2024 – 2027 and updates the previous LDS which covered the period 2023 – 2026.
- 1.3. The Local Plan is accompanied by other planning documents including:
  - **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** – see Section 2
  - **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** – sets out how the Council will consult the local community and other interested parties on developing planning policy for Surrey Heath, and on significant planning applications. The current SCI can be viewed at <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/SCI>.
  - **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)** - produced annually and includes information on how the policies in the Local Plan are being delivered.
- 1.4. The timetable for preparing the Surrey Heath Local Plan is based on current legislation and national planning policy and guidance. However, the Government is changing the way in which Local Plans and supplementary guidance are prepared through measures set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act. At this stage it is proposed that the emerging Local Plan will continue to be prepared under the current Local Plan system in line with the transitional arrangements. As further legislation and guidance is produced the Council will keep this under review.
- 1.5. Further information on the Local Plan, supporting evidence and other related documents can be viewed on the Council's website at <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/development-plan>
- 1.6. For further queries please contact the Planning Policy and Conservation team at: [Planning.policy@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:Planning.policy@surreyheath.gov.uk) or Telephone: 01276 70100
- 1.7. The LDS was agreed by Executive on [to add date after Executive] 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> Consistent with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).



## 2. The Development Plan for Surrey Heath

- 2.1. The current Development Plan for the Borough, i.e. documents containing adopted planning policies is made up of the following:
- Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2011 – 2028, (2012);
  - Camberley Town Centre Area Action Plan 2011 – 2028, (2014);
  - Saved Policies from the 2000 Surrey Heath Local Plan;
  - Saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan which relates to development affecting the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area;
  - Surrey Minerals Core Strategy, 2011;
  - Surrey Waste Local Plan, 2019 – 2033; and
  - Windlesham Neighbourhood Plan, 'made' on 12 June 2019
- 2.2. The Council is preparing a single new Local Plan to cover the period to 2038. This Local Plan will set out strategic policies on issues such as housing and employment, allocation of sites for development and Development Management policies. This Plan will, on adoption, replace all of the current Development Plan policies, except any contained in Neighbourhood Plans.
- 2.3. Surrey Heath currently has one 'made' Neighbourhood Plan covering the Parish of Windlesham. As set out above, this Plan also forms part of the Development Plan for the Borough. Two further areas are designated as Neighbourhood Plan Areas. Further information on neighbourhood planning in the Borough can be found at <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning>.

### Other relevant planning documents

- 2.4. The existing Development Plan is supported by a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). These set out further information as to how policies will be implemented and the expectations from applicants in meeting policy requirements. The following SPD's have been adopted by the Council and will continue to be a significant material consideration in determining planning applications unless they are withdrawn or replaced:
- Deepcut SPD
  - Developer Contributions SPD
  - Infrastructure Delivery SPD
  - Lightwater Village Design Statement
  - Local Heritage Assets SPD



- Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance Strategy SPD
  - Camberley Town Centre Masterplan and Public Realm SPD
  - Residential Design Guide SPD
  - Western Urban Area Character SPD
  - Yorktown Landscape Strategy SPD
  - West End Village Design Statement SPD
- 2.5. These documents will be carried forward to support the future Local Plan. They can be viewed at <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents>
- 2.6. It should be noted that changes to be made through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, 2024 mean that SPDs will no longer be able to be produced. As yet the timing of legislation which will prevent the preparation of SPDs is unknown.
- 2.7. Information on the content and timetables for further planning guidance that supports the implementation of Development Plan policies will be made available on the above webpage when they are available.
- 2.8. In preparing the Local Plan the Council must prepare a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) and a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)<sup>2</sup> as well as appropriate evidence to support the content of the Local Plan.

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<sup>2</sup> See Glossary for further detail on these assessments



### 3. The Local Plan Timetable

- 3.1. Table 1 sets out more detail on the scope of the Local Plan and Table 2 sets out the timetable for key stages of production up to adoption.
- 3.2. The Adopted Policies Map showing the policy and site allocation boundaries will be revised as necessary upon the adoption of the Local Plan.

**Table 1 Local Plan Summary Programme and Timetable**

<b>Document Profile</b>	Surrey Heath Local Plan 2019 - 2038
<b>Coverage</b>	Borough Wide
<b>Subject</b>	<p>The Local Plan will set out the Council's approach to strategic policies, land allocations and detailed policies to help deliver the vision and objectives for the Borough including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlining the requirement for new housing/economic land across the Borough and how these requirements will be met;</li> <li>• Allocating sites for housing;</li> <li>• Specific place based policies;</li> <li>• Policies relating to provision of affordable housing, specialist housing and Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation;</li> <li>• Green Belt policies;</li> <li>• Site specific policies for employment sites;</li> <li>• Boundaries of retail centres, and a strategy for Camberley Town Centre;</li> <li>• Infrastructure provision;</li> <li>• Policies on green infrastructure and nature conservation;</li> <li>• Policies on the historic environment.</li> </ul>





**Table 2 Local Plan Timetable**

<b>Local Plan Stage</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<p>Consultation on Issues and Options and Preferred Approach; and</p> <p>Revised Scoping Report and Interim Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment</p>	<p>This is an early consultation stage seeking views on broad policy approaches and accompanied by an Interim Sustainability Appraisal.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>June – July 2018</p>
<p>Consultation on a Draft Plan and Draft Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment</p> <p>(Regulation 18)</p>	<p>This is an early consultation stage seeking views on draft policies and site allocations and accompanied by an updated Interim Sustainability Appraisal and supporting evidence.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>March – May 2022 and August – September 2022</p>
<p>Publication of a Pre-Submission Plan (statutory 6 weeks) and Final Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment</p> <p>(Regulation 19)</p>	<p>The Council publishes its ‘final’ version of the Plan that it intends to submit for Examination. Updated/additional supporting evidence including a Sustainability Appraisal Report and Habitat Regulation Assessment is also published.</p>	<p>Summer 2024</p>



Submission of the Plan and supporting evidence to the Secretary of State for Examination  (Regulation 22)	The Council sends the Plan, the evidence base and any representations received from the consultation above to the Secretary of State for independent examination.  The Plan will be assessed to see if it is legally compliant and meets tests of 'soundness' set out in national policy.	Winter 2024/2025
Examination Hearing sessions (subject to Inspector availability)	The Examination will usually include public hearing sessions run by the Local Plan Inspector and based around matters and questions set by the Inspector.	Spring 2025
Inspectors Report (estimate – depends on complexity of the Examination and the need for consultation on Modifications)	The Inspector will issue a written report recommending modifications to the Local Plan.	Autumn 2025
Local Plan adoption	The Council adopts the Plan as part of the Surrey Heath Development Plan for the purposes of determining planning applications.	Autumn 2025



## 4. Programme Management and Responsibilities

- 4.1. The scope and timetable for production of the Local Plan is set out in Tables 1 and 2. Any essential adjustments to the programme will be made as part of the next review of the LDS.
- 4.2. The Local Plan is a key corporate project and along with other key corporate projects is monitored quarterly through the Councils internal performance monitoring systems.

### Council Procedures and Reporting Protocols

- 4.3. All decisions of the Executive are subject to call in by Scrutiny Committee. The Local Plan will be reported to Full Council for endorsement at Regulation 19 and for agreement to final adoption of the Plan.

### Risk Assessment

- 4.4. The main areas of risk to the proposed programme are considered to be from the following:
- Staff Changes – the loss of any member of the Policy team is a risk to the overall timetable in that local and technical knowledge is lost with that staff member, including in terms of work undertaken so far on the Local Plan as well as potential gaps in resources in the time it takes to recruit replacement staff.
  - Project Management – whilst there is a high level of expertise within the Policy team there are some studies that will require the use of external consultants. To meet the LDS timetable there will be a need to ensure that issues such as procurement are considered at an early stage in the plan making process and there is an appropriate budget available. There will be the requirement to project manage work procured to ensure limited slippage in the process.
  - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) – the Council must ensure that any long term strategy does not have a significant effect on the integrity of the SPA. The need for agreement with third parties and the need for sufficient mitigation through the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to ensure that housing can be delivered will continue to be a risk.
  - Delivery of Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation – finding acceptable and deliverable sites and a policy approach to meet future needs for pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and plots for Travelling Showpeople is potentially a risk to meeting the Local Plan timetable.



- Changes to planning legislation and guidance – the Government has set out its reforms to the local plan process through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act including transitional arrangements. There is a risk that secondary legislation to implement these reforms will impact on the Local Plan timetable.
- In many instances the delivery of the long-term planning strategy is by other responsible organisations. Delivery may be affected by a range of different factors. The Council will work closely with delivery agencies through the preparation of the Local Plan.

### **Monitoring and Review**

- 4.5. The LDS will be reviewed through the annual Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) which will be produced to the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March. The AMR includes:
- Progress on plan preparation milestones
  - Information on the extent to which policies within the Development Plan are being achieved against key indicators and targets;
  - A recommendation as to whether any policies need reviewing.



## 5. Glossary of Terms

5.1. Throughout this document a number of abbreviations have been used as follows:

AAP	<p><b>Area Action Plan</b></p> <p>A Development Plan Document forming part of the Local Plan for a specific area, such as the Camberley Town Centre AAP.</p>
AMR	<p><b>Authority Monitoring Report</b></p> <p>An annual report which includes an update of how Local Plan policies are being delivered.</p>
DPD	<p><b>Development Plan Document</b></p> <p>The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 refers to these as documents that form part of the Local Plan.</p>
CS&DMP DPD	<p><b>Core Strategy &amp; Development Management Policies DPD</b></p> <p>Part of the Councils current Local Plan.</p>
LDS	<p><b>Local Development Scheme</b></p> <p>The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out Surrey Heath Borough Council's programme for preparing future planning documents. It outlines what documents the Council will be working on and a timetable for the production of these documents.</p>
SA/SEA	<p><b>Sustainability Appraisal incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment</b></p> <p>A Sustainability Appraisal is a tool used to appraise planning policy documents in order to promote sustainable development. Social, environmental and economic aspects are all taken into consideration. Sustainability Appraisal is a compulsory requirement under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the 2002/42/EEC European Directive.</p>
SCI	<p><b>Statement of Community Involvement</b></p> <p>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Councils approach for involving the community and other stakeholders in the preparation and revision of the local plan and supplementary planning documents.</p>
SEA	<p><b>Strategic Environmental Assessment</b></p>



	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes. In plan making it is usually incorporated into the Sustainability Appraisal document.
SHBC	<b>Surrey Heath Borough Council</b> Surrey Heath Borough Council is the Local Planning Authority.
SPD	<b>Supplementary Planning Document</b> These are documents that provide further information and detail to the policies within the Local Plan and how they can be met.



**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Executive**  
**19 March 2024**

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**Local Authority Housing Fund**

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke, Housing &amp; Inclusion</b>
<b>Strategic Director/Head of Service</b>	<b>Nick Steevens</b>
<b>Report Authors:</b>	<b>Nick Steevens, Emily Burrill &amp; Clive Jinman</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report</b>	<b>21 February 2024</b>

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**Summary and purpose**

In December 2022 the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced the £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund. In March 2023 Executive approved the Council's participation in the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) with officers proceeding to acquire six affordable/low-cost properties and 1 bridging property to support those who may be homeless, at risk of homelessness or who live in unsuitable temporary accommodation.

In June 2023, round 2 of the Local Authority Housing Fund was launched which provided a £250 million fund (LAHF R2), with the majority of the additional funding used to house those on Afghan resettlement schemes currently in bridging accommodation and the rest used to ease wider homelessness pressures.

This report sets the background of the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme and seeks approval for the Council's continuation of the scheme with the delivery of two more units of accommodation by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

**Recommendation**

The Executive is asked to RESOLVE that

- (i) the Council's participation in the Local Authority Housing Fund through the delivery of 2 further properties by the end of the 2024/25 financial year be agreed; and
- (ii) the method of delivery of homes under round 2 of the Local Authority Housing Fund be delegated to the Strategic Director for Environment & Community in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Inclusion and the Strategic

Director for Finance and Customer Services.

## **1. Background and Supporting Information**

- 1.1 Surrey Heath has a proud record of supporting resettlement schemes which seek to support those people fleeing conflict and persecution. Like many other local authorities, Surrey Heath continues to experience challenges in securing settled accommodation for households due to the increasing scarcity of social and private rented accommodation and increasing demand.
- 1.2 The Government created the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) in December 2022 to address these immediate pressures and bring forward a stock of affordable housing, initially for those seeking settled accommodation under certain resettlement schemes and then latterly as part of the Borough's wider affordable housing provision.
- 1.3 LAHF offered a £500m capital grant fund was committed for financial years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 to support local authorities to obtain and refurbish property in order to provide sustainable housing for those unable to secure their own accommodation who are here under the following resettlement schemes:
- (i) Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) (collectively referred to as the Afghan Schemes);
  - (ii) Ukraine Family Scheme and the Homes for Ukraine and the Ukraine Extension Scheme (collectively referred to as Ukraine schemes)
- 1.4 The Local Authority Housing Fund provides capital grant funds to participating authorities to support the acquisition and refurbishment of homes to provide sustainable housing for people under the following schemes:
- (i) Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS),
  - (ii) Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
  - (iii) Ukraine Family Scheme,
  - (iv) The Homes for Ukraine and
  - (v) The Ukraine Extension Scheme
- 1.5 The specific objectives of part 2 of the LAHF are to:
- (i) Provide sustainable housing to those on Afghan resettlement schemes at risk of homelessness so that they can build new lives in the UK, find employment and integrate into communities.
  - (ii) Reduce local housing pressures beyond those on Afghan resettlement schemes by providing better quality temporary accommodation to families owed homelessness duties by LAs.
  - (iii) Reduce emergency, temporary and bridging accommodation costs.



- (iv) Reduce impacts on the existing housing and homelessness systems and those waiting for social housing.
- 1.6 As part of the second round of LAHF, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has provisionally identified Surrey Heath as eligible for capital grant funding (under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003), with an indicative additional allocation of £400,000 in funding. This funding covers two distinct elements as below:
- (i) Resettlement element: to fund the provision of a minimum of 1 home.
  - (ii) Temporary Accommodation (TA) element: to fund the delivery of a minimum of 1 home.
- 1.7 The capital funding is divided amongst authorities on the basis of a formula devised using the number of arrivals from the Afghan and Ukraine schemes within each local authority area. The maximum average grant rate per unit is calculated as 40% of the costs of acquisition or refurbishment plus £20,000 per property to cover stamp duty, surveying, legal and other fees, refurbishments, energy efficiency measures, decoration, furnishings, or otherwise preparing the property for rent.
- 1.8 The resettlement accommodation must be affordable/low-cost housing to support wider local authority housing and homelessness responsibilities for the remainder of its lifetime. Main element accommodation will receive a per-property grant of 40% of the estimated average lower quartile property price.
- 1.9 Temporary accommodation funding is allocated based on 1 home per 20 families in nightly paid and B&B temporary accommodation within a given local authority. The grant per property is set at 40% of the median property price plus an allocation of £20k per property to allow for refurbishment and other associated costs.
- 1.10 As with year 1 of the scheme, all participating local authorities have discretion over property acquisition with options that could include:
- (i) Refurbishing or conversion of local authority-owned buildings;
  - (ii) buying, refurbishing or converting non-local authority owned properties, including bringing empty or dilapidated properties back into use;
  - (iii) Purchasing new build properties including converting shared ownership properties;
  - (iv) Developing new properties, and;
  - (v) Working with and supporting other organisations who want to offer accommodation for this cohort.
- 1.11 Funding provided under LAHF is intended to bring forward whole-life housing with each local authority being given autonomy to determine whether the properties are social rent, Affordable Rent, or a discounted

private rent. If properties are disposed of, the Recycled Capital Grant regulations will apply whereby the grant funds will be repayable to the Government.

- 1.12 Because Surrey Heath does not act as a housing provider, officers have worked with Mount Green, an independent housing associations with around 1600 properties in the Surrey and North Sussex area, on the delivery of the 7 properties required under year one of LAHF. Despite some challenges with property acquisition, the partnership arrangement has now secured all 7 properties.
- 1.13 The Partnership with Mount Green and latterly their partner Stonewater has been positive and, if the resolution is agreed, it is intended that this relationship will continue for the delivery of year 2 of the LAHF programme. This still remains the most appropriate delivery vehicle to achieve the LAHF objectives as Mount Green/Stonewater bring expertise and capital funding which limits the resource and financial impact on the Council. Year 1 of LAHF will deliver the 7 properties with only a nominal contribution from Surrey Heath's Affordable Housing reserve.

## **2. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 The Council has previously committed supporting our Ukrainian guests who were fleeing the Russian invasion and Afghans who worked with the Government and armed forces through the respective resettlement schemes. The provision of accommodation for a second phase of LAHF supports families into much-needed, affordable and good quality accommodation without impacting on the limited number of properties coming forward for allocation through the Council's housing register.
- 2.2 The LAHF is designed in a way that mirrors traditional social housing delivery programmes and therefore it is easy for developing Registered Providers (RPs) to understand and work within the Fund.
- 2.3 Affordable Housing Contributions are collected from developers in lieu of the onsite delivery of affordable homes. The presumption is that affordable homes should be provided on new housing developments however where there are circumstances that prevent this, a contribution is taken to enable affordable housing delivery elsewhere in the Borough. Contributions can only be used to support the delivery of affordable homes. Using s106 monies in this way means that any family moved into a property under the LAHF scheme would be paying Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate rent, meaning housing benefit would cover all the rent costs. This would reduce the risk of a family getting into rent arrears and becoming at risk of homelessness, increasing financial cost to SHBC.

## **3. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 3.1 Year 2 of the LAHF scheme offers two more units of accommodation for people within the borough who meet the relevant criteria. The Council

could consider not to continue with round 2 of the LAHF however it would therefore not benefit from the contribution of £400k to bring forward these much-needed additional affordable homes.

#### **4. Contribution to the Council Strategy 2024-2028**

- 4.1 Whilst the delivery of LAHF in Surrey Heath relies on the purchase of existing properties and does not create more homes, it does secure homes from the open market to create additional social housing to meet our local need.

#### **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 Mount Green and Stonewater have agreed to fund the purchase of the resettlement and temporary accommodation properties utilising the £400k LAHF2 fund and without the need for further contributions from Surrey Heath from its Affordable Housing reserve. As a result, the resource implication for Surrey Heath relates to officer time in working collaboratively with Mount Green and Stonewater on the selection of suitable properties.

#### **6. Section 151 Officer Comments:**

- 6.1 The financial implications are outlined in the above report. The property acquisition is funded through the LAHF and the extra officer time can be contained within existing budgets.

#### **7. Legal and Governance Issues**

- 7.1 The existing agreement with Mount Green and their partner Stonewater will need to be reviewed to ensure it is suitable for year 2 of the programme and, if required, the same is varied to ensure suitable contractual provisions are in place.

#### **8. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

- 8.1 No further matters arising.

#### **9. Other Considerations and Impacts**

#### **Environment and Climate Change**

- 9.1 Whilst not specifically relating to the objectives of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, the intention will be to source new or nearly new homes which will be more energy efficient and hold a better energy efficiency rating as set out by the Energy Performance Certificate for each property.

## **Risk Management**

- 9.2 There is a risk of the partnership not being able to source and deliver two properties within the LAHF2 deadlines set by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Through the robust partnership working during the first year of LAHF where 7 properties have now been brought forward, officers are confident that there is negligible risk of not bringing forward these two additional homes.

## **Annexes**

None

## **Background Papers:**

Local Authority Housing Fund - Prospectus and Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-housing-fund-round-2/local-authority-housing-fund-round-2-prospectus-and-guidance>

**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Executive**  
**19 March 2023**

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**Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan**

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Alan Ashbery Sustainable Transport & Planning
<b>Strategic Director/Head of Service</b>	Bob Watson/Gavin Chinniah
<b>Report Author:</b>	Sarita Bishop Principal Planning Officer (Major Projects)/Katie Bailey
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report</b>	<b>23 February 2023</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All wards

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**Summary and purpose**

This report provides an update on the Phase 1 work undertaken to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Surrey Heath (SHBC) to enable the Phase 2 feasibility work to commence. This is required before requests for funding from the Department of Transport (DfT) and other sources may be made so the timely completion of this work would place Surrey County Council (SCC) and SHBC in the strongest position to bid for available funding at the earliest opportunity. The preparation of the LCWIP has been subject to public engagement with residents and stakeholders as set out in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 below.

**Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE to:

- (i) Endorse the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan as Phase 1 of this project;
- (ii) Note this endorsement will enable the commencement of the Phase 2 feasibility work in partnership with Surrey County Council (SCC) following sign off by SCC; and
- (iii) Amend the Executive resolution 64/E(ii) dated 16 November 2021 for consultation to take place with the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Transport & Planning

**1. Background and Supporting Information**

- 1.1 In 2017 the Government produced a Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) outlining its ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for

shorter journeys or as part of longer journeys by 2040. The CWIS sets out the following targets to achieve by 2025:

- To double cycling to 1.6 billion cycle stages in 2025 (a stage is defined when there is a change in the form of transport eg cycling to a railway station to catch a train would be two stages)
- To increase walking stages to 300 stages per person per year
- To increase the number of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% to 55% in 2025

1.2 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans are ten year plans for investing in walking and cycling in an area. They enable a long-term strategic approach to identifying walking and cycling improvements with key outputs including:

- A network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development; and
- A prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment.

1.3 There are four key stages:

- Stage 1 – Preparation of an LCWIP that delivers network plans to identify key walking and cycling corridors, initial high level concept proposals and a prioritised programme of infrastructure.
- Stage 2 - Preparation of detailed feasibility studies for a set of prioritised cycle and walking routes capable of benefiting from any funding opportunities.
- Stage 3 – Preparation of business cases/secure funding for specific schemes.
- Stage 4 – Scheme delivery

1.4 At the Executive held on 16 November 2021, it was resolved that:

- (i) Funding of £20,000 for phase 1 of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) be approved and funding of up to £170,000 be approved to be reserved in the CIL main fund for phase 2 of the LCWIP, as the Council's contribution towards the cost of the production of a LCWIP for Surrey Heath; and
- (ii) Authority be delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & People to agree the final funding amount for phase 2 of the LCWIP up to a limit of £170,000.

1.5 SCC are working with the SHBC to produce a LCWIP for Surrey Heath. They are providing funding of £40,000 for the phase 1 work and £130,000 for the phase 2 work plus officer time. SCC appointed Atkins to undertake the preparation of the LCWIP in partnership with SHBC which has been progressed over the last year or so. The final draft of this document representing the conclusion of phase 1 is the subject of this report and is attached as Annex A.

- 1.6 Early engagement was a key element of the LCWIP to ensure that the views and knowledge of local residents and stakeholders were taken into account. At the outset of the study, public input on existing issues and desired improvements related to walking and cycling was obtained through the Cycle Infrastructure Map Viewer and the Commonplace website.
- 1.7 Preparation of the LCWIP also involved the following steps (having regard to DfT guidance on the preparation of LCWIPs):
- Review of previous studies, strategies and guidance
  - Background data analysis including key destinations, pedestrian and cycle activity and local networks, collision data, key barriers, online public comments, census data and commuting patterns and links to neighbouring boroughs/districts
  - Draft “aspirational list” of cycle routes and core walking zones based on the above
  - Stakeholder engagement to refine the draft proposed network and zones – two sets of individual workshops were held with SCC and SHBC officer with SHBC and SCC local Members, with neighbouring authorities and with other external stakeholders such as local residents associations and local cycling and walking groups. Sustrans also reviewed the work and provided input
  - Prioritisation of phase 1 corridors/areas using a multi-criteria assessment framework
  - Site visits and formal assessments of priority areas using standardised tools such as Walking Route Audit Tool (WRAT) and Route Selection Tool (RST)
  - Identification of potential interventions for the phase 1 routes/areas
  - Further stakeholder engagements (one set of workshops as above) to review the proposed interventions
  - Programme prioritisation and cost estimating
- 1.8 By the end of this year it is envisaged that all Surrey Boroughs and Districts will have LCWIPs in place.

## **2. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 Government funding is available for the delivery of cycling and walking schemes but to secure this funding requires the submission of detailed implementable schemes. The LCWIP is the mechanism to provide these detailed schemes. It is envisaged that a funding bid for a package of LCWIP proposals will be submitted to the Department of Transport and if successful which could secure about £5 million of infrastructure funding for walking and cycling routes within the Borough.

## **3. Proposal and Alternative Options**

3.1 The proposal is for the endorsement of the LCWIP to enable the Phase 2 feasibility work to commence. As an overview 20 aspirational cycle corridors and 11 core walking zones are identified in the draft LCWIP, as shown in the plan below:

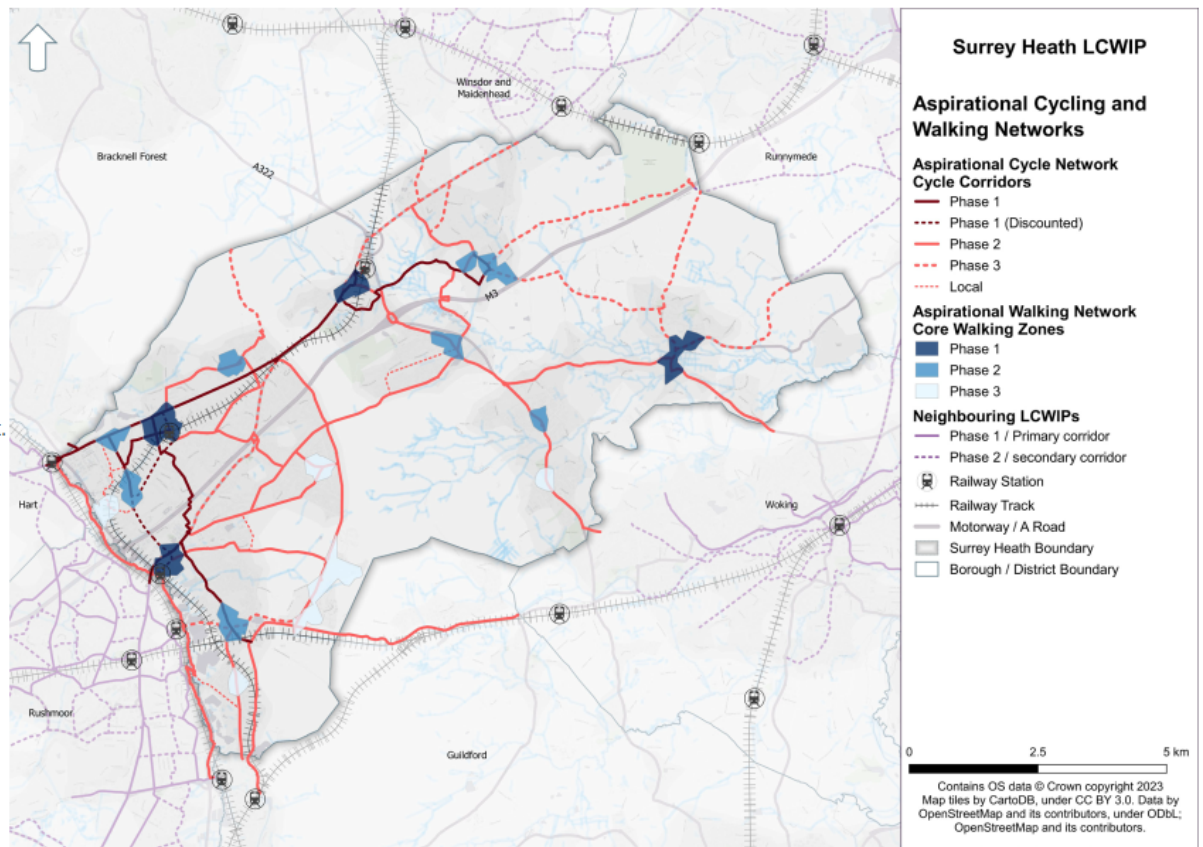


Figure 2. Surrey Heath LCWIP aspirational walking and cycling networks

3.2 As set out above, a multi criteria assessment framework, along with stakeholder input was used to prioritise the aspirational network and select a short list for further analysis as part of the LCWIP. These phase 1 corridors/areas were selected for development of initial concepts for potential infrastructure improvements.

The phase 1 cycle routes/zones are:

- A30 – Camberley to Bagshot Railway Station (Map ref no. 2)
- A30 – Camberley to Blackwater (Map ref No. 3)
- Frimley Road to Camberley High Street (Map ref No. 4)
- Camberley to Rushmoor via Frimley Park Hospital (Map ref No. 6)
- Frimley to Frimley Green (Map ref No. 8)
- Bagshot to Windlesham (Map ref No. 16)

Although the Camberley to Frimley Cycle route scored highly, as funding has already been secured and feasibility work on this is already underway this was omitted from any further work in the LCWIP. This route is shown on the plan below:



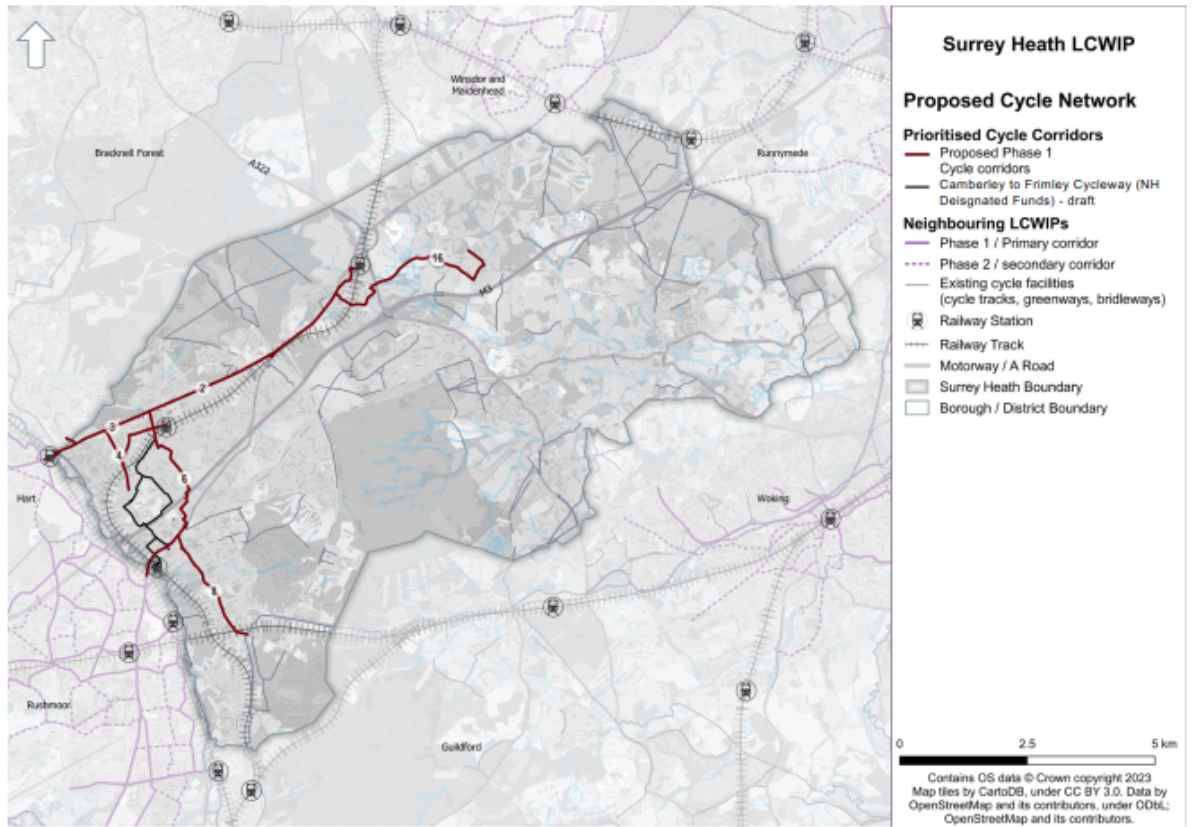


Figure 61. Phase 1 cycle corridors

3.3 The phase 1 core walking zones are:

- Camberley Town Centre (Map ref No. 2)
- Frimley High Street (Map ref No. 4)
- Chobham Village (Map ref No 8)
- Bagshot High Street (Map Ref No 9)

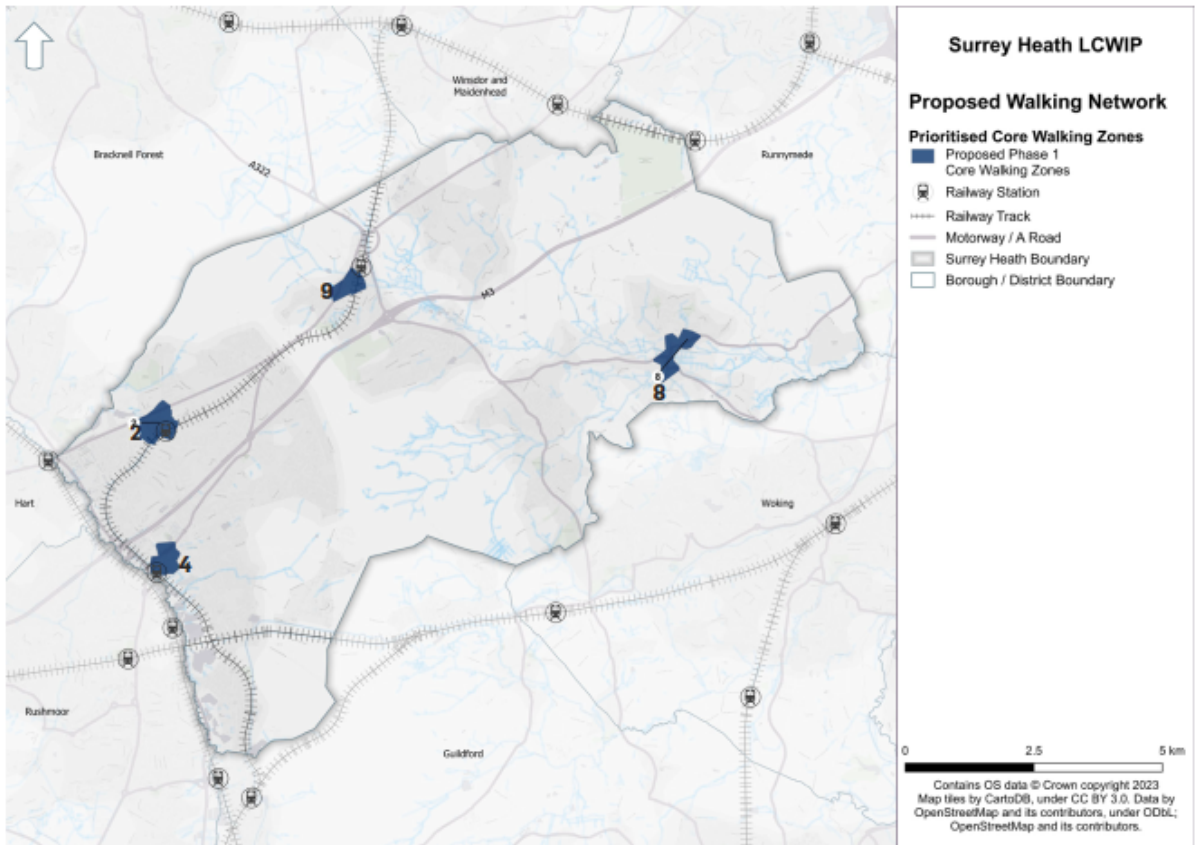


Figure 100. Core Walking Zones – Phase 1 Short List

The LCWIP includes initial interventions and improvements for these routes/zones, but these will be considered in more detail in the next stage of the LCWIP process.

- 3.3 An alternative is that the LCWIP is amended and endorsed as an amended document.
- 3.4 The third alternative is to refuse to endorse the LCWIP. This would mean that the Phase 2 work would not progress and in the absence of implementable schemes funding opportunities for active travel would be lost.

#### 4. Contribution to the Council’s Five Year Strategy

- 4.1 The proposal relates to four of Surrey Heath’s key priorities:

**Environment:** The promotion and enhancement of cycling and walking routes contribute to the Council’s objectives on climate change and air quality working with communities and partners and enable greener and more active methods of travel.

**Health and Quality of Life:** The promotion of cycling and walking contributes to the Council’s objective to promote active and healthy lives for all.

**Economy:** The implementation of a LCWIP is a component part of delivering improvements to the borough’s movement infrastructure and improving connectivity within and beyond our borough boundaries.

Effective and Responsive Council: In preparing the LCWIP it has been the subject of engagement with the community and members from SCC and SHBC. Further engagement will take place as part of the Phase 2 works.

## **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 The funding for phases 1 and 2 of the LCWIP was secured in 2021 as set out above. As such there are no additional resource implications in relation to these phases not previously identified arising from this report.
- 5.2 To date, funding for the implementation and delivery of LCWIP schemes in other Surrey boroughs and districts has been secured from Active Travel England with no requirement for match funding from the local authorities including SCC. However, if SCC/SHBC wished to prioritise a particular scheme in the Surrey Heath LCWIP, following the completion of the Phase 2 feasibility work, it would strengthen the business case put forward to Active Travel England for funding, if funding from SCC/SHBC would also be available ie from SCC Strategic Infrastructure Programme (LCWIPs sit within the forward programme of work in this scheme) or SHBC Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions. In such circumstances, a further report would be brought to the Executive to secure the SHBC element of the funding for the scheme from CIL contributions. This would also be the case if Active Travel England's current approach to funding of LCWIP schemes were to change. It is also noted that there would be potential to bid for other available third party capital funding e.g. from the National Highways Designated Funds for active travel.

## **6. Section 151 Officer Comments:**

- 6.1 No matters arising

## **7. Legal and Governance Issues**

- 7.1 The 2021 Executive report confirmed that a contractual arrangement will be put in place with SCC to ensure that payment of funding follows delivery of key milestones in the production of the Surrey Heath LCWIP. This is in place.
- 7.2 This report also confirmed that SCC, as Highways Authority, will oversee the development and delivery of the LCWIP. SHBC will monitor the progress of the LCWIP development and review the success of funding bids. This remains the current position.

## **8. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

- 8.1 No matters arising.

## **9. Other Considerations and Impacts**

## **Environment and Climate Change**

9.1 See paragraph 4.1 above.

## **Equalities and Human Rights**

- 9.2 One of the objectives of the LCWIP is supporting a high quality of life for all residents. The LCWIP approach and proposals strive to reflect the DfT's guidance on inclusive mobility. An inclusively designed public realm will help achieve social inclusion through good access to people with physical, sensory or cognitive impairments who are travelling on foot and those using mobility aids, people with mental health conditions, dementia and age related and non visible impairments. Improved cycling and pedestrian links as proposed in the LCWIP will enable residents to have better access to local services and other community opportunities.
- 9.3 The feasibility work will include engagement with all key stakeholders to ensure the needs of the local community are understood and responded to.

## **Risk Management**

- 9.4 The key risk is that if the LCWIP is not endorsed, we will miss out on funding opportunities for active travel which are available from the Department of Transport and other sources. The absence of a LCWIP would also adversely impact on the Council's abilities to meet its objectives on climate change, air quality, promotion of cycling and walking.

## **Community Engagement**

- 9.5 The community engagement which took place in respect of phase 1 is set out at paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 above. Further resident and stakeholder engagement will take place as part of the phase 2 work.

## **Annexes**

Annex A Surrey Heath Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan  
<https://surreyheath.box.com/s/9ey2cnq0z35hapb68pb4ds012urhmt72>

## **Background Papers**

Executive report 16 November 2021 Item 64/E

**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Executive**  
**19th March 2024**

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**Community Hub – Exploring Options**

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Housing and Inclusion</b> Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke
<b>Strategic Director/Head of Service</b>	Sally Kipping – Head of HR, Performance & Communications
<b>Report Author:</b>	Renée France – Community Development Manager
<b>PH Sign off:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>

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**Summary and purpose**

To explore options for a Charity Hub within Camberley Town Centre.

**Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) The development of a Charity Hub in Camberley Town Centre be paused pending decision making about the future location of Surrey Heath Council offices and the delivery model that will be adopted following relocation; and
- (ii) As part of any future relocation of Council offices, further engagement with stakeholders takes place (including charity partners and their service users) prior to any decision by the Executive.

**1. Background and Supporting Information**

- 1.1 The 2023/24 annual plan includes an action to bring forward Charity Hub proposals, subject to funding being secured. This paper explores the options for this and the appetite of the current administration to pursue this given the current financial position of the Council.
- 1.2 The original vision of a charity hub was to provide shared space within the Town Centre for charities to work together and as a focal point for residents to gain advice and support, with a particular emphasis on older residents.

- 1.3 Enquiries have been made with potential voluntary sector partners. It has become clear that the potential interest has been driven by a project led by Surrey Heath Age Concern to expand the current premises and concept of the Rainbow Café in order to broaden services to older residents. This concept was developed in 2018 but has not as yet progressed partly due to the pandemic and partly due to funding considerations for this organisation.
- 1.4 Interest from other charities has not yet been identified, however further engagement is taking place including with revenue grant partners such as Citizen's Advice Surrey Heath (CASH), Age Concern, the Hope Hub, Camberley Job Club and Voluntary Services North Surrey (VSNS). Some charity partners have indicated that their clients prefer to have out of town locations whilst others have indicated that town centre space is preferred.
- 1.5 There are already Surrey Heath Borough Council owned properties within the town centre utilised by third sector partners. The Work Shop is also located within the town centre. Demand for office use/office facilities has reduced since the pandemic with the social shift in home working and the increase in confidence in using technology amongst residents.
- 1.6 Were a hub to be developed, it could offer leased office and meeting space for charities, and act as a support hub for residents enabling easy to access physical 'drop in' to third sector services.
- 1.7 There is vacant space available for the hub within the Square or Surrey Heath House. Were the Square to be utilised, there would be direct or indirect costs relating to either the cost of rent or the loss of a rental opportunity. Feedback from charities has indicated that whilst Surrey Heath House is an option, given its location just outside the heart of the town, it is less attractive as it is less likely to attract 'walk ins'.
- 1.8 Currently CASH and VSNS use space within Surrey Heath House. The Hope Hub have their own office space within their existing premises.
- 1.9 Surrey Heath House is likely to be developed in the next few years. It should be noted that there is no obligation on Surrey Heath Borough Council should they relocate to provide office space for partners, however the principle of co-location of public and voluntary services should be something to be explored further as part of the future relocation of the Council offices. The size and facilities of the hub will need to take into account requirements of these partners should the Council prefer to stay co-located.

## **2. Appetite for the Hub**

Discussions with relevant groups have indicated that there is a very limited appetite for the creation of a separate charity hub separate to the consideration that would need to be given as part of the future relocation of the Council offices when that takes place in the future.

## **Surrey Heath Borough Council**

- 2.1 Residents have an expectation that they can visit the Council Offices in person should they wish and this is facilitated by our current location which is accessible with good public transport links. There is also visitor parking available for 30 minutes. There is a reception and Customer Services are located on the ground floor making the facilitation of appointments relatively straight forward. Whilst services encourage appointments to enable more meaningful and in-depth engagement, drop-ins can also be facilitated for services such as Housing. This helps services to be accessible particularly for those who still find technology a barrier to resolving their needs.
- 2.2 Many public services have reduced face-to-face contact in line with reduced resident demand for this type of engagement following the pandemic, an equivalent increase in preference for telephone and email contact, and increasing use of new self-service options available on the Council's website, which are available 24/7. Maintaining all channels for service delivery will be important, particularly if some methods may be easier for some people to use who have particular needs, such as a lack of ready access to technology or due to specific disabilities. Therefore any future location of the Council offices, will need to accommodate a physical space for residents to be able to visit should they wish.

### **Third Sector Partners**

- 2.3 CASH and VSNS have expressed an interest in remaining co-located with the Council.
- 2.4 Surrey Heath Age Concern have responded positively as part of their general vision for the future.
- 2.5 We are awaiting responses from other Revenue Grant holders who already have their own office arrangements. It should be noted that there is no obligation to co-locate. We are in the process of contacting other charities within the borough however demand so far has not been identified for a separate standalone hub.

### **Other Partners co-located at Surrey Heath House**

- 2.6 Discussions with partners are at an early stage. These include the Police, Department of Work and Pensions, National Health Service, and Surrey County Council. This will affect the potential size, location and facilities of any central hub and would mean extending beyond a location specifically for voluntary sector groups.

## **3. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The Executive has the option to:

- i) Ask officers to develop a costed option for a charity hub within the town centre using an existing unit in the square and bring this back to Executive.
- ii) Explore funding options for i) above.
- iii) Explore demand further with stakeholders including residents.
- iv) Instruct officers to pause development of the hub and to wait until a clearer picture is known around any potential move from Surrey Heath House.

#### **4. Contribution to the Council's Strategy**

##### **4.1 Promote healthier and more inclusive communities**

4.1.1 Having a hub that promotes face to face contact may promote better relationships with residents and ensure that charity services are more accessible. This includes the ambition to facilitate a flourishing voluntary sector and will support co-working and therefore better understanding between the Council and revenue grant holders.

4.1.2 The hub will support those in greatest need and be in a position within easy transport access. However it must be pointed out that it may not be accessible to residents who live away from the town centre and cannot easily access transport or technology.

##### **4.2 Support a strong economy and create more homes:**

4.2.1 The use of a unit within the Square will ensure that the Square continues to be a diverse and vibrant economic centre however there would be a cost element relating to the rental value of the unit.

#### **5. Resource Implications**

5.1 Funding for the hub will need to be identified and agreed.

5.2 Resources for the hub will be included in cost projections.

#### **6. Section 151 Officer Comments:**

6.1 There is no funding provided for in the current annual revenue or capital budgets. Once costs are known a business case will have to be made requesting a supplementary budget estimate from Executive/Council.

#### **7. Legal and Governance Issues**

7.1 No further matters arising.

#### **8. Monitoring Officer Comments:**



8.1 No further matters arising.

## **9. Other Considerations and Impacts**

### **Environment and Climate Change**

9.1 None arising.

### **Equalities and Human Rights**

9.2 The proposed hub would be accessible and would provide a more joined up service for residents. However there is a concern that residents who cannot travel to the Town Centre would not be able to access the hub and might therefore feel marginalised.

### **Risk Management**

9.3 None arising.

### **Community Engagement**

9.4 Requires more stakeholder consultation including with residents to demonstrate the demand and cost/benefit of the hub.

**Annexes** none

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## Surrey Heath Borough Council

### Executive

19<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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## Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference for the Petition review of Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order (TPO)

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Alan Ashbery – Sustainable Transport & Planning
<b>Head of Service</b>	Gavin Chinniah
<b>Report Author:</b>	Gavin Chinniah
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Date Portfolio Holder consulted:</b>	11.03.2024
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All

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### Summary and purpose

This report sets out the Terms of Reference for the proposed review regarding the Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order following the debate and acceptance of the petition at Full Council on the 21 February 2024. This report will set out the following key areas:

- Membership and Meetings
- Terms of Reference
- This task and finish is a pilot proposal and shall be used when other requests are made to review other existing TPO's in the Borough.
- To review the guidance relied on by the Council's professional officers and processes for the guidance that constitutes advice in relation to and including special character areas.

### Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that:

- (i) the terms of reference set out in section 3 of this document to enable the review of the existing the Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order to take place and be used to help inform the approach to reviewing other areas order in the Surrey Heath Borough in the future be agreed;

- (ii) the guidance relied on by the Council’s professional officers and processes that constitutes advice in relation to and including special character areas be reviewed; and
- (iii) the Task & Finish Group reports back to Executive once its findings are completed.

## **1. Background and Supporting Information**

- 1.1 The Task and Finish Group has been formed to consider the requests within the petition “Review of Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order” published on 20th September 2023 and debated by Full Council on 21 February 2024.
- 1.2 The Task and Finish Group shall report to Executive on its findings within 3 months of the date the petition was debated at Full Council (subject to any pre-election period that may arise from a general election).

## **2. Membership and Meetings**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Task and Finish Group comprise of 5 Members, including the Sustainable Transport & Planning Portfolio Holder who will chair the Group. This Group will include the author of the original Petition, Cllr Jonny Cope, and will be politically proportionate. Independent input into the group will be explored for example with the Surrey Wildlife Trust or the Woodland Trust. It is intended that the Group meet a maximum of three times to consider the evidence and come to their conclusions and recommendations. The Group shall make decisions by majority.

## **3. Terms of Reference**

- 3.1 Make recommendations to Executive on the outcome of the petition.
- 3.2 Have due regard to any evidence, documents, information and officer advice and opinion the Group considers relevant and expedient to its review and consideration of the requests within the petition.
- 3.3 Determine the timescales required to implement any recommendations the Group is minded to make.
- 3.4 Examine the potential benefits and disbenefits of any recommendations the Group is minded to make.
- 3.5 Determine any revenue and capital costs required to implement any recommendations the Group is minded to make to Full Council. Such costs to include officer time, specialist suppliers and advisors and materials and disbursements.
- 3.6 Determine the wider policy implications of the proposed course of action, including for other relevant sites in the borough.
- 3.7 Explore and examine any potential alternatives to the requests within the petition.

- 3.8 For all recommendations have due regard to suitable levels of contingency and reasonable times for planning and preparation.
- 3.9 This is a pilot task and finish group which will recommend a mechanism to review other relevant Tree Preservation Orders in the Borough when and where this arises.
- 3.10 Further to this the Task and Finish Group will assist in reviewing and if necessary, amending the guidance which professional officers rely upon when assessing tree work applications in the Borough. This would be undertaken in partnership with the task and finish group and the planning service. Should amended guidance be agreed this will be reported back to Executive.

#### **4. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The available options for the Executive to consider are:
- i. To approve the Terms of Reference as drafted.
  - ii. To make amendments to the Terms of Reference.
  - iii. To not agree the Terms of Reference.

#### **5. Contribution to the Council Strategy 2024 - 2028**

- 5.1 The proposed Terms of Reference if agreed will allow the following themes to be delivered.:

**Protect our Environment** – protect and enhance our natural environment and increase local biodiversity.

**Promote healthier & more inclusive communities** – promote health and well-being.

#### **6. Resource Implications**

- 6.1 There will be resourcing implications which will need to be agreed by the task and finish group.

#### **7. Section 151 Officer Comments**

- 7.1 The Council is facing a budget deficit and is using reserves to close the predicted budget gap. It is likely that the financial impacts of dealing with this single TPO is possibly a budget pressure of up to £40,000 with future reviews costing into six figures.
- 7.2 The Council will have to find ways of dealing with this budget pressure through increased efficiencies, service cuts or increasing income.
- 7.3 Once costs have been identified, then the Task and Finish Group will need to make a supplementary budget request to the Executive, if in year. If it

commences from 2025/26 then a budget bid can be made in the next budgeting round.

## **8. Legal and Governance Issues**

8.1 The recommendations are in accordance with the resolution made by Full Council 21 February 2024.

## **9. Monitoring Officer Comments**

9.1 No comments.

## **10. Other Considerations and Impacts**

10.1 None.

## **Environment and Climate Change**

10.2 This is not applicable.

## **Equalities and Human Rights**

10.3 This is not applicable.

## **Risk Management**

10.4 There are potential costs implications of this review and will be worked through by the task and finish group.

## **Community Engagement**

10.5 The Terms of Reference does not include engagement with the general public but a further update will be provided to Executive regarding the outcome of the Task and Finish Group.

## **Annexes**

Annex 1: Wellington Park Briefing Note

## **Background Papers**

None.

# Petition – Review of Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order

## BRIEFING NOTE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### TPO 11/86 – Wellington Park, Camberley

A petition has been received asking 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.*

#### 1. The Petition

The petitioner has added the following additional information to the petition:

We the undersigned are of the view that:

*a) large parts of the Wellington Park estate in Camberley are covered by a Tree Preservation Order 11/86 (“TPO”) put in place before the estate was constructed in the early 1990s.*

*b) Some of the areas covered by TPO 11/86 are defined as woodland which is no longer true, and the Order is now incompatible with the nature of the areas protected which have largely been developed as roads, housing and gardens. The provisions of this TPO form a completely excessive level of protection for spontaneous seedlings, and also for low amenity trees in extremely poor condition.*

*c) Trees on the estate especially those in areas owned by SHBC are causing nuisance to the private properties of a number of residents on the estate, including physical damage due to major branches falling.*

*d) In many areas on the estate the trees and foliage are visibly in need of maintenance to preserve and improve the amenity of the estate and to protect the public from injury. Indeed, in the opinion of professionally arborists, in several cases their current condition poses a danger to residents of the estate and urgent maintenance is required to maintain the amenity and safety of the estate. For example, a branch weighing hundreds of kilograms recently fell from an SHBC owned tree damaging the fence of a residential property and could have caused significant injury.*

*e) The existing TPO 11/86 is designed to protect a woodland area, which is long gone. The provisions covering “woodland areas” of TPO 11/86 are far too restrictive and onerous for a residential area such as Wellington Park, they are preventing much needed.*

*maintenance and should have been replaced long ago with a more appropriate Order that better protected the significant trees.*

*f) The existing TPO 11/86 also completely fails to protect significant trees in some parts of the estate. An Area Order would allow for their immediate protection.*

*g) The imposition of Area TPOs should, (according to the issued Government Guidance "Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice") be a temporary measure and after a survey be replaced with a Specific Order that provides strong protection to those trees where it is justified.*

## 2. History of the Site

The site was originally the Royal Albert Orphanage established in 1864 and comprised a mansion with 200 acres, part of the Collingwood Court estate on the Portsmouth Road to the southwest of Bagshot.



In 1948 the Orphanage merged with The Royal Alexandra School and a new school built in Reigate. The Bagshot premises were demolished, and the site was occupied by a college for the Women's Royal Army Corp. This remained until the mid- 1980 when the site was demolished and sold for development for residential housing.

In response to proposed development, Surrey Heath Borough Council made a Tree Preservation Order – TPO 11/86 – confirmed on 9 May 1986. A copy of the Order and aerial pictures of the site are included in the Appendix.



### **3. Arboricultural Overview of Extant Order**

The current Order comprises eight groups [G1-G8] and 2 woodland compartments [W1 and W2]. At the time the Order was made and confirmed, it was expedient to group numbers of trees and the 2 separate compartments had “pocket woodland” characteristics. If the site was re-assessed now, the groups would likely be maintained, however, it would be difficult to consider the remnants of the compartments as woodland.

Notwithstanding the above, the responsibility for the safe upkeep and maintenance of trees in private ownership lies entirely with the landowner. The Council would always encourage homeowners to have their trees inspected by a qualified arboriculturist on a regular basis. This will assist with the early detection of pests, diseases or structural defects and allow for the long-term management of trees and their retention in a safe and healthy condition.

The extant Order does not preclude effective management of trees in the 8 groups and 2 woodland areas. What the current Order does not do is reflect any trees which have been removed, died naturally, or failed in storms. Nor does it offer constraint to trees which have grown naturally through seeding or having been planted in the eight groups after development.

### **4. Arboricultural Overview of Re-survey**

Government guidance states that all TPOs should be kept under review. In this context it is regarded as good practice for an LPA to review and eventually revoke pre-1999 orders made under the current regulations. However, reviewing old area orders, has immensely high resource implications. As a result, most local authorities are acutely aware that older Orders may benefit from updating through re-survey and placement of a new instrument but are unable to progress this work.

In the case of Wellington Park, a brief examination of aerial photography suggests the following approximate tree composition at each of the specified locations:

W1 – 190 trees, W2 – 50 trees, G1 – 15 trees, G2 – 50 trees, G3 – 10 trees, G4 – 20 trees, G5 – 15 trees, G6 – 15 trees, G7 – 5 trees, G8 – 10 trees.

With a minimum of 380 trees to survey, with most within private residential gardens, the time to survey and record data would be extensive. It would be necessary to engage an external specialist arboricultural consultant to undertake the survey aspects of any new Order[s]. Data collection using GPS based software would provide an accurate record of current significant trees for inclusion in new tree specific and group specific orders. The use of Area Orders must be avoided as these should only be used in an emergency, on a temporary basis and in advance of a detailed survey. Area Orders would also only protect those trees present when the Order was made.

## **5. Governance framework for the petition**

All petitions received must be dealt with in accordance with the Petition Scheme at Part 4 of the Constitution. The scheme provides that any petition which receives over 250 signatures will be considered by the Council. Under the terms of the scheme, a petitioner is entitled to present their petition at the relevant meeting of the Council and speak for up to five minutes.

The e-petition opened for signatures on 20 September 2023 and closed on 19 December 2023. It has received 96 signatures. A paper petition requesting the same action was submitted by the same petition organiser on 18 December 2023; the paper petition contained 269 signatures.

The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at this meeting and the petition will then be debated. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision and confirmation will be published on the Council's website.

## **6. The next steps and options**

The Council must consider this briefing note and the petition and decide how it wishes to respond. Given the information contained in this briefing note and the need for the Council to make informed decisions within the adopted budgetary framework, the Council may consider it appropriate to undertake its own research, investigation and analysis before coming to a decision. This briefing note highlights several matters in particular that are likely to benefit from this approach; including timescales for implementation, any potential alternative options and identifying the cost implications and funding arrangements.

The creation of a task and finish group comprised of Councillors could undertake such research, investigation and analysis. More specifically, the group could explore an appropriate proposal to review the current mixed Group and Woodland TPO and consider the cost of outsourcing a re-survey following a procurement process to appoint a specialist supplier. Consideration would also be needed in relation to additional officer time to manage the project and to compile and issue a new Order[s]. A draft terms of reference for a task and finish group is set out below, should Members wish to proceed on this basis.

In the alternative, Council could proceed as follows:

- (i) take the action the petition requests – this would require the Council to also identify and agree additional resources as this cannot be met from within the existing budget and staffing resources and the Council must be mindful

of the need for sufficient contingency given the current uncertainty on cost and timescales for delivery; or

(ii) not to take the action requested at this time.

## **7. Conclusion**

There is potential benefit for re-survey and re-order of Wellington Park, as there is for other TPO's within the Borough, many of which are large or exceptionally large Area Orders dating back to the 1960's. The constraint to achieving this is entirely down to resources and the high initial costs for local tax payers, both in terms of finance and officer time.

The stated desire of the petitioner to achieve a re-survey to completion in 6 months is unrealistic in practical terms given the steps the Council would be required to undertake. Suitable external surveyors will need to be sourced and procured, appointed and managed. Access may well be difficult to many properties and objections to new orders are also likely to be made meaning referral to committee for confirmation or not.

An update can be provided once more is known.

## **8. Draft Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group**

The Task and Finish Group is formed to consider the requests within the petition "Review of Wellington Park Tree Preservation Order" published on 20th September 2023 and debated by Full Council on 21 February 2023.

The Group shall report to Full Council on its findings and recommendations within 6 months of the date the petition was debated at Full Council. Additional time to report to Full Council may be agreed in exceptional circumstances by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Monitoring Officer.

### **Membership and meetings**

The Group shall comprise 5 Members, including the Chair, who will be the Portfolio Holder for Planning. The Group shall meet a maximum of three times to consider the evidence and come to their conclusions and recommendations. The Group shall make decisions by majority.

### **Outputs**

Make recommendations to Full Council on the outcome of the petition.

Have due regard to any evidence, documents, information and officer advice and opinion the Group considers relevant and expedient to its review and consideration of the requests within the petition.

Determine the timescales required to implement any recommendations the Group is minded to make to Full Council.

Examine the potential benefits and disbenefits of any recommendations the Group is minded to make to Full Council.

Determine any revenue and capital costs required to implement any recommendations the Group is minded to make to Full Council. Such costs to include officer time, specialist suppliers and advisors and materials and disbursements.

Determine the wider policy implications of the proposed course of action, including for other relevant sites in the borough.

Explore and examine any potential alternatives to the requests within the petition.

For all recommendations have due regard to suitable levels of contingency and reasonable times for statutory planning processes and preparations.

APPENDIX

Extracts of TPO 11/86

**SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL** \*

From The Chief Executive and Town Clerk To The Director of Planning and Technical Services

Date 9th May, 1986 Copy : Land Charges Section

My Ref: JS/MPB/PD10/238 **MEMORANDUM** Your Ref: C.P.O.

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Re: Town and Country Planning Act, 1971 **13 MAY 1986**

Tree Preservation Order 11/86 C.B.C. & S.O.

Land at the WRAC College, Camberley, Surrey ADMIN.

I attach for your attention a copy of the above named Order which was made by the Council. Could you please note that it was made pursuant to both Section 60 and 61 of the above Act and therefore comes into effect immediately.

*M. P. Clarke*  
Chief Executive and Town Clerk.

(1) 19/5/86  
DIRECTOR  
C.P.O.  
CF  
13 MAY 1986  
C.B.C. & S.O.  
ADMIN.  
S/S/GM  
for file  
UB  
13/5/86

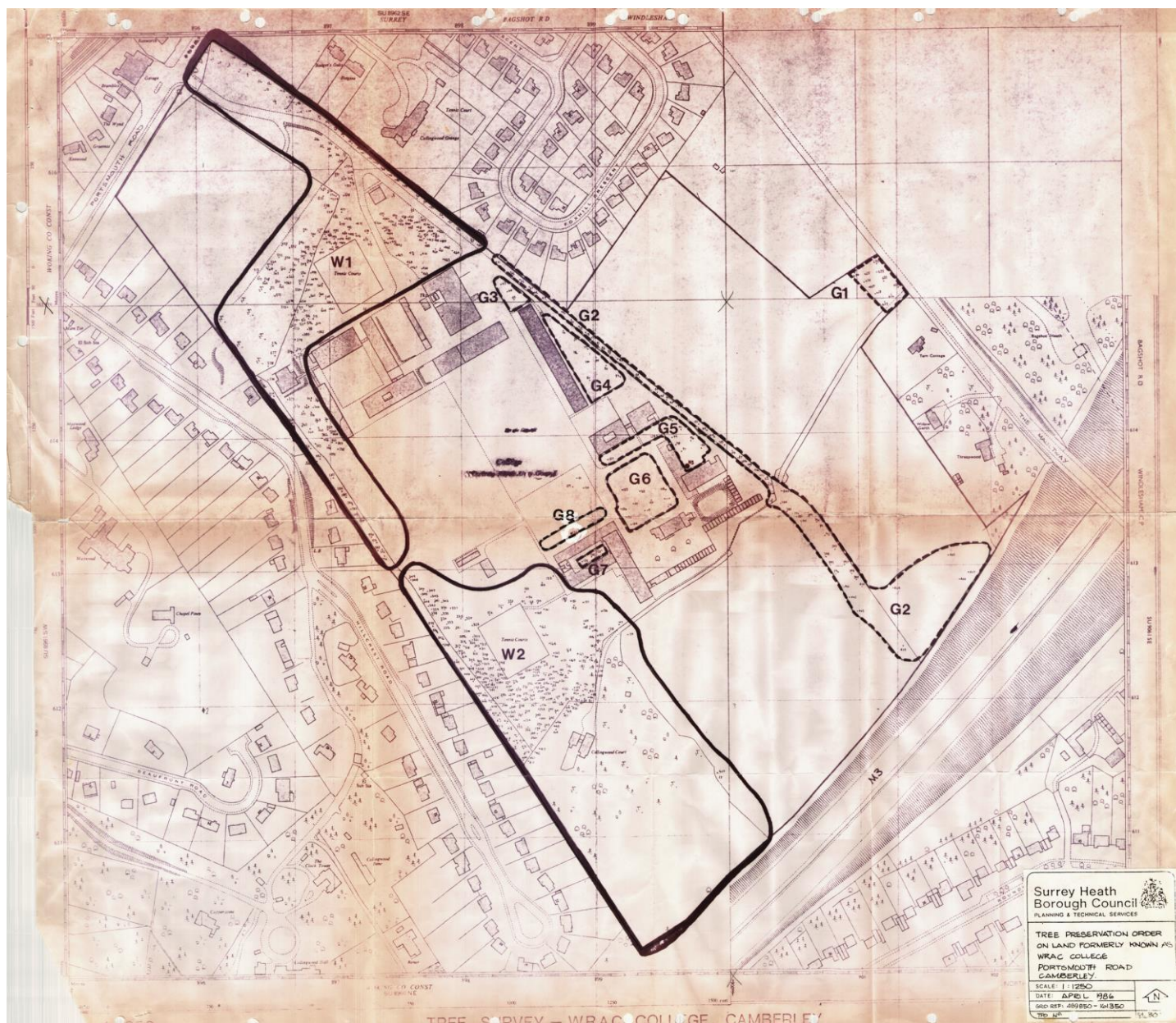
## FIRST SCHEDULE

Groups of Trees*(within a broken black line on the map)*

NO. ON MAP	DESCRIPTION	SITUATION
G1	10 Oak, 1 Pine,	Land at WRAC
G2	1 Birch, 3 Beeche, 8 Pine, 8 Oak, 5 Larch, 4 Sweet Chestnut, 4 Norway Maple, 1 Cypress	College, Camberley, Surrey,
G3	1 Pine, 2 Lime	" "
G4	3 Lime, 3 Scots Pine, 2 Sweet Chestnut, 1 Norway Spruce	" "
G5	5 Cedar, 2 Oak, 1 Sweet Chestnut, 1 Beech 1 Wellintonia	" "
G6	6 Lawsona Cypress, 1 Douglas Fir, 3 Cedar 1 Lime,	" "
G7	1 Lime, 1 Arizona Cypress, 1 Oak.	" "
G8	50 Leylandi over 50m in height	" "

Woodlands*(within a continuous black line on the map)*

NO. ON MAP	DESCRIPTION	SITUATION
W1	A mixture of Oaks, Pines and Sycamores	Land at WRAC College, Camberley, Surrey
W2	A mixture of Oaks, Limes and Birch	" "



Photographs

1971 + Overlay of the Order



015



+

Overlay of the Order





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**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Executive**  
**19 March 2024**

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**Revenue Budget 2023/24**  
**Management Report – Quarter 3**

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Leanne MacIntyre – Performance and Finance
<b>Date Portfolio Holder signed off:</b>	26 February 2024
<b>Strategic Director:</b>	Bob Watson, Finance and Customer Service
<b>Report Author:</b>	Greta Ratkeviciute, Corporate Accountancy Manager
<b>Key Decision:</b>	yes
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All

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### Summary and purpose

To provide the Executive with a high-level view of the budget and financial performance for the third quarter of 2023/24 – accounting period ending 31 December 2023.

The Council is currently showing an underspend against profiled budgets to the end of Quarter 3 (31 December 2023). Services are predicting a year-end forecast of outturn of **£126,000 underspend** (positive variance).

### Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that:

- (i) the spend against the approved revenue budget for the period 1 April to 31 December 2023 and the predicted forecast of full year outturn be noted;
- (ii) any comments and recommendations from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee to the Executive from its meeting on Wednesday 6 March 2024 be noted.

### 1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 This is the third formal budget management report against the 2023/24 approved revenue budget as at 31 December 2023 (end of Quarter 3).
- 1.2 The high-level summary by service is shown below and tracks the budgetary movements from the budget set at Council in February 2023 to include agreed budgetary adjustments:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Budget agreed at Council</b>	<b>Carry forwards agreed by Executive</b>	<b>Budget Base Review savings</b>	<b>Supplementary Estimates agreed at Executive</b>	<b>Reallocation from Corporate Line</b>	<b>Working budget</b>
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Environment and Community	8,806	24	(318)	0	0	<b>8,512</b>
Finance and Customer Services	2,762	0	(56)	0	60	<b>2,766</b>
HR Performance and Communications	3,709	32	(15)	0	0	<b>3,727</b>
Property and Economic Development	(971)	11	(33)	0	0	<b>(993)</b>
Legal Democratic Services and Strategic Management	1,565	0	0	0	0	<b>1,565</b>
Planning	545	147	(5)	0	100	<b>788</b>
Corporate Financing and Debt Management	1,051	0	396	0	(160)	<b>1,287</b>
<b>Overall Position</b>	<b>17,468</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,652</b>

1.3 In addition, the table includes corporate budgets, which consists of the anticipated efficiencies from the base budget review process, repayment of debt (Minimum Revenue Provision - MRP), capital charges and corporate inflation which needs to be allocated out to services where appropriate.

1.4 Carry forward budgets of £214,000 (from 2022/23) was agreed in the outturn report by the Executive at its meeting on 18 July 2023 and is shown in the 2023/24 working budgets.

1.5 The budget figures in the table below represents the budget management position against the **working budget** for the year:

<u>Service</u>	<b>Working budget</b>	<b>Profiled budget P9</b>	<b>Actuals P1-P9</b>	<b>Year-end Forecast</b>	<b>Forecast Variance</b>
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Environment and Community	8,512	6,217	5,862	8,613	101
Finance and Customer Services	2,766	2,219	3,649	3,100	334
HR Performance and Communications	3,727	2,718	2,310	3,508	(219)
Property and Economic Development	(993)	(2,758)	(2,510)	(951)	42
Legal Democratic Services and Strategic Management	1,565	1,228	1,124	1,477	(88)
Planning	788	638	722	411	(376)
Corporate Financing and Debt Management	1,287	984	1,998	1,367	81
<b>Overall Position</b>	<b>17,652</b>	<b>11,245</b>	<b>13,155</b>	<b>17,526</b>	<b>(126)</b>

1.6 Service commentaries. The services are predicting an outturn position as highlighted below. Overspends are an unfavourable variance against the budget and are shown as positive numbers; underspends are a favourable variance against the budget and are shown in brackets and in red type which represents a negative number:

<b>Environment and Community - overall overspend £100.7k:</b>	
<b>Car Parks: overall overspend - £152.2k:</b>	
£61.6k for electrical maintenance works for safety reasons in Main Square	61.6k
£11.3k electricity cost is running higher than budgeted and will be for foreseeable future next year's budget has been increased to reflect that	11.3k
£8.4k - current lifts that we have are ageing assets and require substantial maintenance to make/keep them safe for public use	8.4k
£6.8k security at MSCP has always run higher than budget set, this has been corrected for 24/25 budget	6.8k
£6k - signs and lines for to be fee paying car park spaces	6.0k
£3k - increase in building vandalism occurrences	3.0k
£3k - cleaning cost is running higher than budgeted and will be for foreseeable future next year's budget has been increased to reflect that	3.0k
(£3k) - slight underspend expected for fire equipment maintenance	(3.0k)
£2.5k additional transport costs for PCN income	2.5k

£49.6k - Cash Collection-previous supplier went into administration – we are using SCC supplier at present	49.6k
3k - small decrease on overall income	3.0k
<b>Recycling And Refuse - overall underspend - (£25.1k)</b>	
(£22.5k) income for bins at Nicholas King Homes development. New development, as part of the planning they had to cover the cost of refuse bins which was not in our budget	(22.5k)
(£19.4k) - There has been an increase Biz refuse collection, and this is an anticipated forecast based on run-rates	(19.4k)
(£90k) - favourable contract indexation on core and variable JWS contract;	(90.0k)
£100k - Pension was undercharged and apprenticeship levy was not charged to JWS. SHBC's share is about £100k - TBC	100.0k
£5.6k - Site Maintenance - Doman Rd repairs not in forecast £13k part recharge to Amey. Amey is disputing this charge and may not pay their share so there is a risk that we may need to pay full amount	5.6k
£0.6k - small drop on income	0.6k
£0.6k small overspend on timesheet hours	0.6k
<b>Community Services: overall underspend - (£1.7k)</b>	
£18k - changed policy on meals at home to maintain number of vehicles but budget assumed a reduction.	18.0k
(£15k) saving expected to be achieved throughout remaining of the year within Community Services partnership with Runnymede (e.g. transport, day centre). First 3 quarters are fixed and quarter four will be final invoice and the exact amount will be confirmed	(14.9k)
(£4.1k) volume on first aiders is lower than budgeted	(4.1k)
(£0.7k) Exterior Lighting Upgrade at WVC	(0.7k)
<b>Licensing: overall underspend - (£3.7k)</b>	
(£5.2k) - Increase in liquor licences	(5.2k)
(£1k) increase in number of Taxi Licensing	(1.0k)
£1.3k down on gambling licenses	1.3k
£1.2k - DBS Checks -all driver checks thro umbrella co to save officer time	1.2k
<b>Corporate Enforcement: overall underspend - (£2k)</b>	
£2.4k - overspend on standby allowances within corporate enforcement	2.4k
(£10k) saving within Corporate Fraud & Investigations. There was a review of CFI role and post was regraded to achieve savings	(10.0k)
£2.9 Income from Court cases has not delivered as expected	2.9k
£2.7k - £1.2k - Increase demand in eco green bags; £1.5k - some other contractual inflation higher than anticipated	2.7k
<b>Emergency planning: overall underspend - (£0.8k)</b>	
(£0.8k) Overall under spend	(0.8k)
<b>Environmental Services-Enforcement: overall underspend - (£4.8k)</b>	
(£6.2k) savings from a gap between leaver and starter and we have a saving of 3 months for EH officer	(6.2k)
£1.4k - other overspend	1.4k
<b>Highway And Public Toilet CIs: overall underspend - (£4k)</b>	
(£4k) Lower demand for street litter bin replacement	(4.0k)

<b>Public Health Enforcement: overall overspend - £14.7k</b>	
£11k - Legacy budget on repayment of legal fees for court cases. This proved to be unachievable, and council has taken a view to removed that completely going forward	10.9k
£2.7k reduction of achievable income on scrap metal licences, licences are 3-year duration but were budget to renew on annual basis	2.7k
£1.1k - Contractual costs gone up more than anticipated for two contractors TAS and HIS - this is to do with statutory stand by service for EH issues	1.1k
<b>Pest And Dog Control Services: overall overspend - £2.7k</b>	
£2.3k - Decline in volume in pest control - based on reviewed run rate	2.3k
£1.1k - Release Fees -Budget stretch, fees increased, with chipping less council required	1.1k
<b>(£0.7k) Overall under spend</b>	<b>(0.7k)</b>
<b>Recreation and Leisure: overall underspend (£4.8k):</b>	
<b>Places Leisure Camberley - overall underspend £39k</b>	
Places Leisure Camberley: £66k - £88k additional utility cost relating to last year. This is based on benchmarking done in Apr22	63.5k
<b>(£18.5k) Income from PL was understated</b>	<b>(18.5k)</b>
<b>(£6k) Small savings across the service</b>	<b>(6.0k)</b>
<b>Camberley Theatre: overall underspend (£14k):</b>	
<b>(£45k) saving on staffing cost, saving comes from 3 vacancies during the year, posts are now filled</b>	<b>(45.0k)</b>
<b>(£28k) Increased sales on Pantomime</b>	<b>(28.0k)</b>
<b>(£12.5k) saving on moving to digital printing</b>	<b>(12.5k)</b>
<b>(£10.2k) Camberley Comedy Festival finished, this was income that wasn't budgeted less equipment hire higher than anticipated</b>	<b>(10.2k)</b>
<b>(£4.5k) Extra marketing requested by performers within Theatre Marketing</b>	<b>(4.5k)</b>
£25.3k RAAC inspection, investigation, and report	25.0k
£15k - running on higher electricity costs throughout the year	15.0k
£15k - unachieved income on Frimley Lodge Live as the event was not run	15.0k
£15k - NHS Frimley Respiratory Clinic ceased from Sept 23 + uptake for corporate meeting reduced due to meetings taking place online, Delay in increase due to rolling contracts for shows on sale	15.0k
£11k - Increased volume of merch, increased artist fees in line with minimum wage	11.4k
£3.8k additional spend was required at Ian Goodchild Centre for: £1.3k-window replacement and £1.5k - electricity	3.8k
£1.5k small overspends across the service	1.0k
<b>Parks And Open Spaces: overall underspend (£17.7k):</b>	
<b>(£4k) savings on staffing cost, mainly for unused overtime, mainly at Frimley Lodge Park</b>	<b>(4.0k)</b>
<b>(£11k) underspend on tree surgery (SANGS Exp)</b>	<b>(11.0k)</b>
£17k - unplanned spend on replacement barrier & associated security	17.1k
1k - Small overspend across the service	1.0k
£5.4k - Eco Dog bags, Frimley Green Pavilion plans	5.4k

£16.4k - Floodlight fitting & repair costs, purchase of goals, POD system web-based software	16.4k
(£8.4k) overall underspend on equipment	(8.4k)
(£30.7k) change in contract /increase in rent from cafe, Payment for Lightwater Barrier - insurance claim	(30.7k)
£4k - offset by negative impact of a new contract for cafe at Frimley Lodge Park	4.0k
(£9k) budget error - to be investigated	(9.0k)
£1.5k - Scout hut long meadow - vacated by scouts came back SHBC. The building unusable, however as the property is now vacant it is our responsibility to cover NDR. However, the team is challenging this rateable value as this should reviewed so this may not be refunded back	1.5k
<b>Community Safety: overall underspend (£19.4k):</b>	
(£19.4k) Budget on grant payments hasn't been used apart for £1k donation towards Fly-tipping	(19.4k)
<b>Museum: overall overspend - £8.3k</b>	
£5.3k - Emergency lighting and lighting upgrade & annual fire assessment	5.3k
£1.8k - Agreed overspend to cover absence	1.8k
£1.2k - Blue plaques funded by (SCC& French) and roman coins conservation funded Old FOSHM. This is net position	1.2k
Housing Services	
Overall underspend within the service	(23.0k)

<b>Planning - overall underspend (£376.4k):</b>	
£170k in BB - £161.4k down on Fee income down due to economic climate: high Interest rates/ building works have been postponed and £9k on non-fee income which is dependent on and offsets the consultants' fees. As needed basis, regarding homeowners complaints, dangerous structures/enquiries.	170.4k
(£372k) in PLA & DA - Budget 23/24 included (£235k) Star chamber savings for PPA income. Expected additional PPA Income in 23/24 is £277k, either agreed or in final negotiations. Out of this £277k - two PPAs (£50k) and (£25k) are at final stages of negotiation, the rest agreed. Associated planning fees for these large developments, (£348k). There has been a regulatory increase by the Government of Planning Fees Dec 23. Normally, 25% and 35% on major applications	(372.2k)
£65k - Castlegrove Road - plans to be reworked and resubmitted (DEFRA funding never claimed, before lockdown agreed). If project went ahead now, it would probably cost £80/£90k. FY Forecast reduced to zero. Will not go ahead in the short term	65.0k
(£38.9k) - in LP - Grant will be claimed, in arrears, for delivery of biodiversity net gain, FY23/24 to DEFRA for Biodiversity Grant. 1st application claimed retrospectively in Sep 23 in respect of invoice from Birdwood Ecology, value £10,655. 2nd & final application will be made in Mar 24. Expected Grant claimed £48K. Grant could be claimed up to £53k	(38.9k)



<p>£94.9k in LLC YTD down on all types of income: Land Charges, CON29 Searches and Street Name &amp; Numbering Income are running behind prior year. This is due to the economic climate: high Interest rates, less people moving. Shortfall of Land Charge Income is covered off by excess of Income from Development Management</p>	94.9k
<p>overall saving on <b>staffing cost (£42.3k):</b>  <b>(£5k)</b> - in BB - two part-timers in full time establishment positions; <b>(£15k)</b> - in PLA &amp; DA - YTD savings on vacant Planning Officer post and <b>(£10k)</b> Arboricultural Officer leaving in Jan24, some consultancy cost will be required so this is an overall position; <b>(£4.6k)</b> In LP - Expected £32k YTD saving in salaries due to vacant planning officer post, and £10K in agency staff offsets the expected £40k spend on timesheet hours; <b>(£7k)</b> maternity leaver, 5 months gap not being filled; £1k minor overspend</p>	(42.3k)
<p>overall saving for <b>Supplies and Services (£253.2k):</b>  <b>(£175k)</b> in LP - underspend in the current year. Estimated <b>(£85k)</b> of Consultancy and <b>(£90k)</b> of Legal Fees was carried forward from 22/23 and will request that to be carried forward into 24/25, as a result of delay of the publication of local plan;</p>	(185.0k)
<p><b>(£65k)</b> - Castlegrove Road - plans to be reworked and resubmitted (DEFRA funding never claimed before lockdown agreed). If project went ahead now, it would probably cost £80/£90k. FY Forecast reduced to zero. Will not go ahead in the short term</p>	(65.0k)
<p><b>(£28k)</b> - in BB - <b>(£25k)</b> lower spend, forecast recalculated based on run rates; <b>(£3.1k)</b> in PLA &amp; DA;</p>	(28.1k)
<p>Savings offset by £23k of overspend: £10k in LD - Seasonality of spend does not align with budget phasing; in Trees - £13k overspend on consultancy cost to cover post of Arboricultural Officer leaving in Jan24; £1.7k within LLC</p>	24.9k

<p><b>Property and Economic Development – overall loss of income £42k:</b></p> <p><b>Camberley Town Centre: overall underspend of (£235k)</b></p> <p>Budget assumption considered the ongoing unresolved queries at that time, which was assumed will not be resolved in FY23/24. Queries resolved Q4 FY 22/23 and income expected £200k as per the initial agreement. As per latest reconciliation received in Jan-24, this figure has been revised and now showing Q3. Once we receive final FY23-24 figure this is still an estimate and it may go up or down</p>	(235.0k)
<p><b>Albany Park: overall underspend of (£72.9k)</b></p> <p><b>(£44k)</b> Income increase due to combination of rent review due Sept 23 and assumption of 3 rent free not yet actualised. In Jan-24 statement shows a positive insurance recharge that was not reported in Q2, but now is showing Q3 forecast</p>	(67.9k)

(£7.5k) Assumption on operational costs was that some of the units/properties will be vacant. To date expenses such as letting, legal and professional fees, utilities costs and building repairs and maintenance are low because the units/properties are all leased but one	(5.0k)
<b>Town Centre Investment: overall overspend £783.6k</b>	
Increase in void service charge to reflect the service charge budget completed and produced by Praxis. - Vacant properties service charge cost provision is 35% of 2.2million (service charge budget)	297.9k
Income adjustment includes Boots rent reduction by 271k and we have received 59.3k income from IQEQ which relates to outstanding fund for the previous FY	211.7k
NDR under-budget by 260k (budget was based on estimates provided) and actual building maintenance expenditure is higher than anticipated	274.1k
<b>Theta: overall underspend of (£174.k)</b>	
Vacant unit now occupied since May-23 budget assumption was that the property will be vacant in the current FY.	(77.1k)
NDR over-budget by (97k) (budget was based on estimates provided)	(97.4k)
<b>Ashwood House: overall underspend of (£28.1k)</b>	
Additional income due to tenant paying half the rent during budgeted rent-free period	(28.1k)
<b>Public Offices: overall overspend £10.8k</b>	
(£39k) one vacant post as well as budget was higher for higher grade than actual	(39.0k)
£32k Costs for general and window maintenance and car park barrier were not included in the budget and £7.6k Costs for cleaning was not included in the budget. £16.1k - The rest repairs and maintenance gone up as well	55.7k
Ad hoc consumable cost high	3.0k
Income increase is due to additional lease of floor area by a tenant.	(9.0k)
<b>Strategic Property Development: overall underspend of (£46.2k)</b>	
£45k Budget for ad hoc works not been spend as much as budgeted so far	(50.0k)
£5k additional spend on regeneration manager post for PA which was not budgeted originally and some underspend on employee travel related costs	3.8k
<b>Vulcan Ind Estate: overall underspend of (£8.1k)</b>	
(£11.4k) Assumption on operational costs was that some of the units/properties will be vacant. To date expenses such as letting, legal and professional fees, utilities costs and building repairs and maintenance are low because the units/properties are all leased but one	(11.4k)
3.3k - Some units are now vacant and we are incurring costs which was budgeted to be covered by tenants	3.3k
<b>St Georges Industrial Estate: overall underspend of (£51.5k)</b>	
(£23.7k) Rent increase post rent review held in May-23, finance was advised of a change in rental income in Jan-24, this has now been reflected in the accounts	(23.7k)

<p><b>(£27.8k)</b> Assumption on operational costs was that some of the units/properties will be vacant. To date expenses such as letting, legal and professional fees, utilities costs and building repairs and maintenance are low because the units/properties are all leased but one</p>	(27.8k)
<p><b>Investment Management: overall underspend of (£122.2k)</b></p> <p>(£87.8k) - savings on staffing costs: (£68.8k) one vacant post as well as budget was higher for higher grade than actual. (£19k) savings on consultancy fees.</p>	(87.8k)
<p><b>(£61.9k)</b> - The units/properties are fully leased therefore building repairs and maintenance costs expected to be low.</p>	(61.9k)
<p>£27.5k - Budget error correction, income not expected</p>	27.5k
<p><b>Economic Development: overall underspend of (£20k)</b></p> <p><b>(£20k)</b> - Savings on UKSPF capacity payment – contribution to salary costs to be c/fwd into 24/25.</p>	(20.0k)
<p><b>Trade City: overall overspend £2k</b></p> <p><b>(£10k)</b> - Operational costs budget was based on the assumption that some of the units/properties will be vacant. To date expenses such as letting, legal and professional fees, utilities costs, and building repairs and maintenance are low because the units/properties are fully leased</p>	(10.0k)
<p>£12k - Rental income budget for three units was at higher rate than actual contractual rate</p>	12.0k
<p><b>London Road / High St: overall overspend £4.6k</b></p> <p>£4.6k - Loss of income due to two tenants not renewing their lease, thus we now have two vacant properties.</p>	4.6k
<p><b>Business Breakfast: overall underspend of (£0.3k)</b></p> <p>No business breakfast events been held, overall saving. There is no income or costs</p>	(0.3k)

<p><b>Legal Democratic Services and Strategic Management – overall underspend (£118.6k):</b></p> <p><b>(£30k)</b> Additional elections funding -DLUHC - electoral integrity</p> <p><b>(£4k)</b> saving on canvassers timesheet hours</p> <p><b>(£92.3k)</b> Savings on staffing cost: <b>(£39.8k)</b> in legal team maternity leaver work being absorbed by the remaining of the team: <b>(£25k)</b> &amp; <b>(£12.5k)</b> &amp; <b>(£15k)</b> in FOI, Members and Civic Support teams - there was a gap between leaver and new joiner and new employees joined on lower than budgeted grades/scp;</p> <p><b>(£21.9k)</b> Underspend on Members Allowance based YTD run-rate</p> <p><b>(£10k)</b> small savings on events budgets, town twinning</p> <p>£40k overspend on Printing</p>	<p>(30.0k)</p> <p>(4.0k)</p> <p>(92.3k)</p> <p>(21.9k)</p> <p>(10.0k)</p> <p>39.5k</p>
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<p><b>HR Performance and Communications – overall underspend (£219.2k):</b></p> <p>FY Parking Fee budget which won't be required for this year (25.0k)</p> <p>(£28.5k) saving on rent and service charge for Citizens Advice Bureau. Rent is now subsidised, and service charge is covered within PED budget (28.5k)</p> <p>Savings on staff and staff related costs (£181.2k)</p> <p>(£15k) gap between leaver and starter and a small saving on grading (£7.2k) for Community Development Manager post and (£7.8k) for Communications Manager (£30k) - A leaver for Senior Community Development Officer (Sport and Wellbeing) - savings from Sep-23. This role has been regraded to a lower grade. Further leavers not being replaced - Community Development Apprentice (£12k); National Management Trainee (£30k); Application Developer (£63.5k) (150.5k)</p> <p>Other staff related costs - (£4.7k) less spend on mileage; (£26k) savings on either lower, actual NI lower than budgeted; £7.4k offset by overspend on overtime (30.7k)</p> <p>£15.5k - budgeted income from Community Centres is not being generated 15.5k</p>	
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<p><b>Finance and Customer Services - overall overspend £364.9k:</b></p> <p><b>Customer service: overall underspend of (£126.5k)</b></p> <p>(£132k) Savings on staffing cost, 3 unfilled posts and one post budgeted at 1 FTE but filling it at 0.81 FTE; (132.0k)</p> <p>Offset by £5.7k reduction in postal recharges 5.7k</p> <p><b>Revs &amp; Bens: overall underspend of (£37.7k)</b></p> <p>(£150.1k) on staffing cost maternity leavers and vacant posts (150.1k)</p> <p>£90k on software 90.0k</p> <p>£22k on legal fees 22.3k</p> <p><b>Finance: overall overspend £529k</b></p> <p>(£40k) saving on unplanned spend this year on Traveller Incursion; (40.0k)</p> <p>£77k increased audit fees set by PSAA; 77.0k</p> <p>£601k of additional agency/consultancy cost to cover vacant post. All contractors extended to end of March 24; 601.0k</p> <p>(£109k) Agency overspend is partly offset by vacant established posts (109.0k)</p>	
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<p><b>Corporate Financing and Debt Management - overall overspend £81k:</b></p> <p>Pension contribution. This is based on current billing which is based on current Establishment List. It is under review 81.0k</p>	
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- 1.7 **Base budget review.** The Executive on 18 July 2023 received and reviewed a report on the base budget review savings proposed by services. At the meeting they agreed to accept number of the proposals in the report. These are summarised below:

(all figures in £000)	Base budget review agreed efficiencies				
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2027/28	Total
<b>MTFS target</b>	(500)	(350)	(200)	(150)	(1,200)
<b>Base Budget Review</b>	(530)	(286.5)	(58)	(77)	(951.5)

- 1.8 The budget adjustments from the agreed efficiencies will be made in the next quarter and reflecting in that period's monitoring report. Additionally, the report will highlight any areas where the efficiencies are not on target to be delivered in year.

## 2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 It is imperative for strong financial management that the revenue budgets are reviewed regularly and reported on a quarterly basis to both the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee and the Executive.

## 3. Proposal and Alternative Options

- 3.1 The Executive is asked to note the management report on the 23/24 Revenue Budget for the period 1 April to 31 December 2023 and also to note any remedial actions proposed by service areas.
- 3.2 The Executive is also asked to note any comments and recommendations from the recent Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee made at their meeting on 6 March 2024.

## 4. Contribution to the Council's Five-Year Strategy

- 4.1 The budgets agreed at Council are aligned to and support the approved five-year strategy.

## 5. Resource Implications

- 5.1 The budget monitoring is related back to the original budgets set at Council in February 2023.

## 6. Section 151 Officer Comments:

- 6.1 Whilst the Council is predicting an underspend at year end, it is considered that no additional remedial action other than that proposed by services needs to be taken in terms of supplementary budget estimate requests. It is a case of managing overspends in some areas with underspends in others – and work to the overall budget figure.
- 6.2 The base budget review process has proved very successful in delivering on the budget reviews and has achieved the MTFS target. This will be developed further

during the next MTFs and budget plan which was agreed by Council on 21 February 2024.

- 6.3 During the next financial quarter, work is planned to remain within the predicted underspend and ensure that the financial year closedown is prepared for as effectively as possible.

## **7. Legal and Governance Issues**

- 7.1 The revenue budget is monitored monthly and reported to CMT, Executive and Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee quarterly.

## **8. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

- 8.1 The Committee's terms of reference include the function to monitor, review and to report to the Leader/ Executive in relation to the performance of the Council's services.

## **9. Other Considerations and Impacts**

### **Environment and Climate Change**

- 9.1 Details of these are in the individual service areas that the budgets support.

### **Equalities and Human Rights**

- 9.2 Details of these are in the individual service areas that the budgets support.

### **Risk Management**

- 9.3 Inadequate budget management by the Council's services represents a reputational and financial risk to the Council.
- 9.4 Regular financial monitoring of budgets enables risks and pressures to be highlighted and addressed at an early stage so that mitigating actions can be taken and any opportunities to improve the budgetary position can be implemented.

### **Community Engagement**

- 9.5 Where necessary engagement will be taken through individual service areas the budgets support.

**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Executive**  
**19 March 2024**

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**Capital Budget 2023/24**  
**Budget Management report – Quarter 3**

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Clr Leanne MacIntyre – Performance and Finance Portfolio
<b>Strategic Director</b>	Bob Watson - Strategic Director Finance and Customer Service
<b>Report Author:</b>	Kaha Olad - Capital Finance Business Partner
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report</b>	26 February 2024
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All wards

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**Summary and purpose**

To provide the Executive with a summary of the Council’s progress against the 2023/24 capital programme and budget for the first three quarters of the financial year (FY), the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023.

**Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that:

- (i) the spend against the approved capital programme for the period 1 April to 31 December 2023 be noted; and
- (ii) the proposed reprofiling of budgets to future years, be noted and provisionally approved.

**1. Background and Supporting Information**

- 1.1 This is the second monitoring report against the 2023/24 approved capital programme and budget as at the 31 December 2023.

- 1.2 At the end of Quarter 3 the total spend and commitments to spend were **£4.105 million** against an approved budget of **£15.951 million**, which amounts to **25.7%**.
- 1.3 There is a forecast underspend for the year of **£7.641 million** of which **£7.484 million** will either be profiled into future years or given up and replaced with the revised capital programme approved at Council on 21 February 2024.
- 1.4 Executive is asked to provisionally approve the reprofiled budget, and to note that the revised planned expenditure against the programme for 2023/24 will be **£8.310 million**. Final approval of reprofiling will be determined and requested in the capital outturn report following the end of the financial year.
- 1.5 A summary of the capital programme and expenditure by Service Area is provided in Table 1 below. A detailed breakdown of the 2023/24 capital programme and expenditure is included at Annex A.

**Table 1 – Capital Programme 2023/24**

	Total 2023/24 Programme	Current Spend & Commitments	Forecast Spend	Q3 Forecast Overspend/ (Underspend)	Reprofile to Later Years
Service Area	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Property and Economic Development	9,848	585	2,474	(7,374)	7,362
Environment & Community	5,861	3,423	5,654	(207)	117
HR, Performance & Communications	151	74	142	(9)	0
Finance & Customer Services	28	19	23	(5)	5
Planning	63	4	17	(46)	0
<b>Grand Total All Capital Schemes</b>	<b>15,951</b>	<b>4,105</b>	<b>8,310</b>	<b>(7,641)</b>	<b>7,484</b>
Capital Contingency	254	0	93	(161)	0
<b>Grand Total All Capital Schemes</b>	<b>16,205</b>	<b>4,105</b>	<b>8,403</b>	<b>(7,802)</b>	<b>7,484</b>

- 1.6 The majority of projects to be reprofiled to later years relate to Property and Economic Development initiatives, where it can be seen that of the **£7.484 million** reprofiled, **£7.312 million** relates to just four schemes, as shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2 – Major Underspends Reprofiled**

Reprofiled Scheme	Reprofiled Amount £million
London Road Block	3.262
Property Acquisition Strategy	2.343
Cambridge Square Refurbishment	1.407
Ashwood House Public Realm	0.300
<b>Total High Value Reprofiling</b>	<b>7.312</b>



- **London Road Block £3.262 million** – the total expenditure required for this programme is currently under review, and may result in a further capital bid. Work is currently underway to review these schemes. It is likely that the reprofiled expenditure and new expenditure will happen over the course of 2024/25 and 2025/26. This project relates to the acquisitions of sites and demolitions required to accumulate and prepare the site for future regeneration. **This will be required in future years and the reprofiled amount is included in the new capital programme.**
- **Property Acquisition Strategy £2.343 million** – a scheme on which there has been no expenditure to date, and there are not any potential sites currently identified for purchase in-year. This capital budget was originally agreed in 2017/18 and 2018/19 and is for strategic acquisitions; there is no certainty of when this may be spent. **This has not been reprofiled in the new capital programme and is likely to be surrendered. Future acquisitions will be subject to their own independent business case and budget request.**
- **Cambridge Square Refurbishment £1.407 million** - this is a scheme agreed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and was put on hold during the pandemic. The service are currently reviewing the whole scheme. **The new capital programme contains budget for works around the town centre regeneration which will include these projects.**
- **Ashwood House Public Realm £0.300 million** – this scheme is delayed due to resourcing issues and now requires a new growth bid in 2024/25 due to increased cost of scheme. **The new capital programme contains a revised project budget for these regeneration public realm works.**

1.7 Of the underspend **£7.641 million** in year, **£7.484 million** has been reprofiled to future years (as shown above) and the remaining **£0.157 million** relates to underspends on completed schemes surrendered by Services, see Table 3 below:

**Table 3 – Surrendered Scheme Budgets**

Project Code	Project Names - Class Code - As per CIVICA	Surrendered Underspend £ million
C0701	Pennypot Lane	(0.040)
C1437	Replacement of Elect Distrib Boards at SHH	(0.012)
C2047	Watchetts & Frimley Gr Rec Ground Tennis & Netball	(0.088)
C2052	Frimley Lodge Fitness Trail	(0.001)
C2601	Hérons Court Lake	(0.006)
C1142	Xcam 360 imagery from Geosphere	(0.009)
C2065	Water Bowser	(0.004)
<b>Total Surrendered Underspends</b>		<b>(0.159)</b>
Overspends		0.002
<b>Net Underspends Surrendered</b>		<b>(0.157)</b>

- 1.8 The figures above exclude the use of the Capital Contingency. As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 there is planned use of the £254,000 Capital Contingency as follows:

**Table 4 – Capital Contingency**

	£
<b>Capital Contingency Available</b>	<b>254,000.00</b>
<b>Use of Capital Contingency:</b>	
C2071 Power Station Removal from London Road Recreation Ground	7,551.88
Car Parking Urgent Projects Where Insufficient Capital Maintenance Budget Available	85,371.00
<b>Total Use of Capital Contingency</b>	<b>92,922.88</b>
<b>Capital Contingency Not Allocated to Capital Projects</b>	<b>161,077.12</b>

- 1.9 The Capital Maintenance Budget £117,606 has been used to fund approved urgent projects where this has insufficient funds the Capital Contingency Budget has been approved to be used to support the funding. The projects to be funded from the Capital Maintenance Budget are as follows:

**Table 5 – Capital Maintenance Budget**

	£
<b>Capital Maintenance Budget</b>	<b>117,606</b>
<b>Projects to be Funded from Capital Maintenance Budget</b>	
C2049 Camberley Bowls Club Forecast Overspend	15,000
Main Square CP Upgrade Fire Systems	50,000
63a High Street Bagshott	40,000
Electrical Switch Gear - Main Square Car Park	85,000
Level 5 Barrier	7,577
CIVICA Cash Management upgrade Overspend	5,400
<b>Total Use of Capital Maintenance Budget</b>	<b>202,977</b>
<b>Insufficient Capital Maintenance Budget to be Funded from Capital Contingency</b>	<b>85,371</b>

## **2. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is imperative for strong financial management that the capital budgets are reviewed regularly and reported on a quarterly basis to both the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee and the Executive.

## **3. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The Executive is asked to note the report on the 2023/24 Capital Budget for the period 1 April to 31 December 2023.
- 3.2 The Executive is also asked to provisionally agree the reprofiling of budgets to later years, with the proviso that, if required in year, the reprofiled budgets can be adjusted back and reported to Executive in subsequent reports. The final approval will be following year end outturn and after the loading of the new capital programme approved at Council on 21 February 2024.

## **4. Contribution to the Council's New Strategy**

- 4.1 The budgets agreed at Council on 21 February 2024 are aligned to and support the approved new strategy.

## **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 The original capital programme was set at Council in February 2023 and included budget for new projects and the reprofiling of budgets from prior years to allow projects to complete.

## **6. Section 151 Officer Comments**

- 6.1 The Council continues to spend on its capital assets and infrastructure. The year-end position is still fluid due to market conditions, however it is considered that no remedial action needs to be taken at this point in time as a number of projects that currently reporting minimal or no spend at present are still anticipated to complete by the end of the financial year.
- 6.2 There are some major projects in the Property and Economic Development service with significant budgets that are currently under development (for example the London Road site) that will need to have budget profiled to match the expected expenditure; the new capital programme approved at Council on 21 February 2024 includes an element of this reprofiled budget.
- 6.3 As the Council continues with its review of its finances and stabilisation of its processes, the capital programme for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 was subjected to a full review to determine the validity in the current economic climate and also the deliverability of some of the schemes being reprofiled. This has meant that some schemes as previously proposed have been removed from the programme and replaced with more relevant and updated capital schemes in the programme.
- 6.4 The new programme was approved at Council on 21 February 2024 and will commence in the next financial year. In developing this programme due consideration was given to the budget profile of the projects and ensuring the proposed programme is deliverable in the years it covers.

## **7. Legal and Governance Issues**

- 7.1 The Capital budget is monitored monthly and reported to senior management and discussed with Portfolio Holders by their senior managers; it is also reported to Executive and Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee quarterly from Quarter 2 onwards.

## **8. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

- 8.1 No further matters arising.

## **9. Other Considerations and Impacts**

### **Environment and Climate Change**

- 9.1 Details of these are in the individual service areas that the budgets support

### **Equalities and Human Rights**

9.2 Details of these are in the individual service areas that the budgets support

### **Risk Management**

9.3 Inadequate budget monitoring represents a reputational and financial risk to the Council.

9.4 Regular financial monitoring enables risks and budgetary pressures to be highlighted and addressed at an early stage so that mitigating actions can be taken.

9.5 All major projects (by value or reputational risk) will have their own risk register and these will feed into the service and corporate risk registers.

### **Community Engagement**

9.6 Where necessary engagement will be taken through individual service areas the budgets support.

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## Surrey Heath Borough Council

### Executive

19 March 2024

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### Report of the External Partnerships Select Committee

**Strategic Director/Head of Service** Gavin Ramtohal  
**Report Author:** Eddie Scott  
**Wards Affected:** N/A

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#### Summary and purpose

To detail the recommendations of the External Partnerships Select Committee following its consideration an item in relation to odour pollution at Camberley Sewage Works at its meeting on 28 November 2023.

#### Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that a letter be written to OFWAT, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Surrey Heath MP, highlighting the need for better regulation of water companies in relation to Air and Land Pollution, including the potential for additional enforcement powers for local authorities.

#### 1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 The above recommendation follows thorough consideration of an item in respect of severe odour pollution at Camberley Sewage Treatment Works by the External Partnerships Select Committee at its meeting 28 November 2023.
- 1.2 The Committee first considered a report, by the Strategic Director – Environment and Community, which gave background and outlined the series of events, following complaints of severe nuisance odours emanating from Camberley Sewage Treatment Plant during the summer of 2023.
- 1.3 Throughout the consideration of the item, the Committee scrutinised the response of Thames Water to the severe sludge event, how the situation had been allowed to develop, and the learnings which would hopefully result in such an event not taking place again.

#### 2. Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 Following the Committee's questions and comments James Bentley, Operations Director for Thames Valley and the Home Counties, Thames

Water, acknowledged that mistakes had been made during the series of events, and apologised for not communicating with residents in the affected area, and Councillors and Officers sooner and for not implementing odour control measures quicker.

- 2.2 However, despite this, it was felt by Members that there was an overall lack of sympathy and ambivalence to the distress caused to Camberley residents by Thames Water, typified by the reluctance to commit to any form of financial compensation. However, it was acknowledged by the Committee that this was symptomatic of wider problems in respect of the regulation of water companies; and that the regulatory framework and associated sanctions failed to protect residents. As a result of this, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Executive for a letter to be written, to highlight the need for water companies to be tightly regulated in respect of air pollution and land pollution (in addition to existing regulatory provision in relation to pollution of the waterways and provision of consumer water supply). Moreover, the Committee recommends that Camberley be used as an example of where Thames Water had diverted the risk of fines for watercourse pollution, by mitigation activities which had in turn caused air pollution.

### **3. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The Executive has the option to accept the recommendation from the Select Committee or to reject the Committee's recommendation to lobby for better regulation.

### **4. Section 151 Officer Comments:**

There are no additional budgetary implications of this report.

### **5. Legal and Governance Issues**

- 5.1 In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Executive is required to consider this report and its recommendations and, within two months of the Executive Meeting at which they are received.

### **6. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

- 6.1 No matters arising.

### **Annexes**

None

### **Background Papers**

None



**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Executive**  
**19 March 2024**

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**Write-off of Irrecoverable Bad Debts**

<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr Leanne Macintyre – Finance Portfolio Holder
<b>Strategic Director/Head of Service</b>	Bob Watson – Strategic Director Finance Customer Services
<b>Report Author:</b>	Ellie White – Revenues Manager
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report</b>	26 February 2024
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All wards

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**Summary and purpose**

To approve the write-off of irrecoverable bad debts for Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debtors over £1,500.

**Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) bad debts in respect of Council Tax for **£130,393.93** and those in respect of Business Rates for **£160,983.92**, totalling **£291,377.85** be approved for write off;
- (ii) bad debts in respect of sundry debts for **£3,320.20** be approved for write off;
- (iii) the removal of **10** housing and sundry debts totalling **£5,343.26** that has been carried out under the scheme of delegated authority by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services be noted, as the debts are no longer recoverable under the Limitation Act 198;
- (iv) the write-off of **58** sundry debts totalling **£27,322.86**, which are individually below £1,500, carried out under the scheme of delegated authority by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services be noted;
- (v) bad debts in respect of **15** property debts totalling **£338,115.24** be approved for write off.

## 1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 Surrey Heath Borough Council's Revenues Team have consistently maintained in-year collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates. For 2022/23 in year collection for Business Rates was 99.9% of the debit. For Council Tax in-year collection was 98.4%
- 1.2 Whilst the Revenues Team maintain high collection rates, there are debts which cannot be recovered either in full or in part due to the circumstances of the debtor.
- 1.3 Irrecoverable debts are put forward for write off twice in the financial year. This is the second report for the financial year 2023/24.
- 1.4 Attached at **Annex A (Exempt)** is a schedule of bad debts for Council Tax and Business Rates, the individual amounts of which are greater than £1,500. Financial Regulations 6.6.2 requires that any bad debt in excess of £1,500 shall only be written off with the approval of the Executive.
- 1.5 All of the debts have been subject to the relevant recovery action and tracing enquiries have been undertaken.
- 1.6 The Council's enforcement agents have also been unable to recover the debts from the forwarding address obtained from the tracing undertaken and the debt is now considered irrecoverable. In the future, if a Council Tax payer's address is found, the debt can be written back on and reinstated for debt recovery to be further pursued.
- 1.7 In respect of Council Tax, a total of **£130,393.93** is being written off in the current financial year to date with the cost being shared between all preceptors. A total of £202,993.81 will have been written off for 2023/24. The net collectable debt for 2023/24 is £101,421,845.20 and the amount requested for write off represents 0.13% of the total collectable debt. The reasons for writing off are given on **Annex A**.
- 1.8 In respect of Business Rates, a total of **£160,983.92** is being written off. A total of £246,470.48 to be written off for 2023/24. The net collectable debt for 2023/24 is **£49,000,829** (reducing to £37,223,463 after reliefs) and the amount requested for write off represents 0.33% of the total collectable debt. The reasons for writing off the balances are listed on **Annex A**.
- 1.9 The continued collection of the Council Tax arrears has been achieved by judicious use of all the recovery options made available to us by the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations. The recovery options available including making special arrangements, direct deductions from a debtor's wages or benefits and in cases where all other options are not available or have failed, the use of Enforcement Agents.

- 1.10 On business rates, the Council will use all legal methods available to carefully to ensure that we maximise collection but also allow viable businesses to continue trading.
- 1.11 The Housing Sundry Debts total of **£25,753.41** is being written off. Where the debt is no longer legally considered legitimate debts and debt written off under delegation of Financial Regulations 6.6.1. The write off recommendation from the Housing service is at **Annex B and Annex B1 (Exempt)**.
- 1.12 Sundry Debts total **£10,232.91** is being written off. Where the debt is no longer legally considered legitimate debts and debt written off under delegation of Financial Regulations 6.6.1. The write off recommendation from the Finance service is at **Annex C, Annex C1 and Annex C2 (Exempt)**.
- 1.13 Commercial property, light industrial and office debt total **£39,898.34** are to be written off. The write-off recommendation from the Property and Economic Development Service is at **Annex D (exempt)**.
- 1.14 Retail debts total **£298,276.90** are to be written off. The write-off recommendation from the Property and Economic Development Service is at **Annex E (Exempt)**.

## **2. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 These debts are deemed as irrecoverable after exhausting all available recovery methods therefore requesting for them to be written off. The Council will then have a clear representation of all the remaining debts to collect.
- 2.2 Some debts have exceeded the statute of limitations for recovery in accordance with the Limitations Act 1980 and are therefore consider to no longer be valid debts and are irrecoverable under law.

## **3. Proposal and Alternative Options**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the debts as set out in Annexes A, D and E, having been deemed irrecoverable, be written off. The only other option would be to leave them on the accounts which would show a false situation.
- 3.2 The write-offs under Annexes B and C are for noting having been approved under delegation in the Council's Constitution.

## **4. Contribution to the Council's New Strategy**

- 4.1 Proper management of debtor accounts contributes to stabilising the Council's finances and production of robust accounts.

## **5. Resource Implications**

- 5.1 Although these debts are being written-off, the likelihood of recovery is so low that it will not be relevant to the accounts and resources. Wherever possible recovery costs are reclaimed from debtors.

**6. Section 151 Officer Comments:**

- 6.1 It is sound financial management to represent debts in the accounts accurately and the deletion of debtors that are not recoverable is a routine practice to ensure a true and fair view in the accounts.
- 6.2 In the case of Council Tax debts and Business Rate debts, the write-offs will be against the 'collection fund'. Provision is made in the annual forecast of collectable taxes for an element of non-collectible ('bad') debts. The amounts above are within the expected tolerances.
- 6.3 The Council makes provision in the accounts for an element of 'bad debt' in accordance with proper accounting practices. Sundry debts will either be charged back to the relevant service or charged against this provision.

**7. Legal and Governance Issues**

- 7.1 In accordance with the advice from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), personal details of the debtor's that are subject write-off can only be made public if a full risk analysis as regards possible vulnerability has been undertaken. In cases being recommended for write-off the authority holds insufficient information as to the debtor's circumstances e.g. age group or possible disability, to perform a proper risk assessment and therefore all cases should remain on the confidential part of the agenda, listed under the Exempt Annexes A, B, C, D and E.

**8. Monitoring Officer Comments:**

- 8.1 None in addition to the matters raised within the report

**9. Other Considerations and Impacts**

**Environment and Climate Change**

- 9.1 N/A

**Equalities and Human Rights**

- 9.2 As some of the debtors maybe vulnerable, if any of their personal details were place in the public domain the Council could be subject to legal action.
- 9.3 The recoveries team works with the other services in the Council to ensure the Council is not pursuing vulnerable residents unnecessarily.

## **Risk Management**

- 9.4 As some of the debtors maybe vulnerable, if any of their personal details were place in the public domain the Council could be subject to legal action.

## **Community Engagement**

- 9.5 N/A

## **Annexes**

Annex A	Council Tax and Business Rates individual debts for write-off	Exempt
Annex B	Housing sundry debt write-off form	Exempt
Annex C	Accounts receivable sundry debt write-off form from Finance	Exempt
Annex D	Commercial property, light industrial and office sundry debt write-off form from Property and Economic Development	Exempt
Annex E	Retail property sundry debt write-off form from Property and Economic Development	Exempt

**Exempt Annexes show the name of the debtor or business name and are not for publication**

## **Background Papers**

None

By virtue of  
Regulation 21(1)(A) of the Local Authorities (Executive  
Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England)  
Regulations 2000.

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**Exclusion of Press And Public**

**Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that, under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
14 (part)	1/3 (Information relating to any individual.) and (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

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