

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive
held at Council Chamber, Surrey Heath
House on 22 July 2014**

+ Cllr Moira Gibson (Chairman)

+ Cllr Richard Brooks	- Cllr Mrs Vivienne Chapman
+ Cllr Keith Bush	+ Cllr Craig Fennell
+ Cllr Colin Dougan	+ Cllr Charlotte Morley

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

In Attendance: Councillors Rodney Bates, Paul Deach, Tim Dodds, Audrey Roxburgh and Judi Trow.

29/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 16 July 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

30/E Digital Services Working Group Terms of Reference

The Executive was reminded that, at its meeting on 20 May 2014, it had agreed to establish a Digital Services Working Group under the Transformation Portfolio. The Group Leaders had been asked to nominate to this Working Group and Terms of Reference were to be decided at a future meeting of the Executive.

The Executive considered proposed Terms of Reference for the Working Group. It was agreed to amend the Terms of Reference to state that the Working Group would meet on a minimum of 4 times a year.

It was emphasised that the Working Group would be Member driven. Officer involvement would be limited to committee administrative support and specialist ICT advice when required.

The Leader reported that the Conservative Group members of the Working Group would be: Councillors David Allen, Bill Chapman, Paul Deach, Colin Dougan, Charlotte Morley and Valerie White. The Chairman would be the Transformation Portfolio Holder, Councillor Colin Dougan and, in his absence, meetings would be chaired by Councillor Charlotte Morley.

Resolved, that the Digital Services Working Group's Terms of Reference, as amended and set out at Annex A to the minutes, be adopted.

31/E Infrastructure Delivery Supplementary Planning Document

The Infrastructure Delivery Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) would address the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy

and the Borough Council's approach to Section 106 (S106) developer contributions. The SPD placed particular emphasis on directing monies collected towards infrastructure and avoidance measures required by European Legislation i.e. Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace as a priority.

Following agreement by the Executive on 9 July 2013, a draft SPD had been subject to statutory consultation. Members noted the responses received during the consultation process. A final version of the SPD had been prepared which took into these comments.

The Infrastructure Delivery Supplementary Planning Document included the appropriate sections from the Council's existing Developer Contributions SPD which would be superseded by the Infrastructure Delivery SPD.

Resolved, that

- (i) the amended Infrastructure Delivery Supplementary Planning Document be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in support of the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy; and**
- (ii) the Infrastructure Delivery Supplementary Planning Document be implemented on 1st December 2014 in line with the implementation of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule.**

32/E Revocation of the 2008 Validation of Planning Applications Supplementary Planning Document and Adoption of New Local Validation List

The Validations of Planning Applications SPD had been adopted by the Executive on 17 June 2008. The SPD was intended to assist applicants and developers by listing various application requirements to enable the registration of a planning application.

Members were advised that the document was no longer fit for purpose as it did not follow current government guidance and contained out of date requirements. It was therefore proposed to replace the SPD with a new Local Validation List, which would comply with current best practice guidance and would facilitate electronic working. In addition, the Local Validation List, unlike an SPD, could be reviewed every 2 years. It was also proposed that, as it was important that the Local Validation List remained up to date, the Executive Head of Regulatory should be authorised to make minor changes to the List as necessary.

Resolved

- (i) to revoke the 2008 Validation of Planning Applications SPD;**
- (ii) to adopt the new Local Validation List; and**

(iii) that the Executive Head of Regulatory be authorised to make minor changes to the Local Validation List.

33/E Drainage Works Programme for 2014/15

The Executive considered a proposed Drainage Works Programme for 2014/15. The work schedule contained works that were undertaken regularly as a maintenance responsibility and project works which were more involved both in complexity and duration.

Members considered proposed projects in Chobham and Lightwater which could be undertaken following receipt of DEFRA funding, with additional funds required being met by the Drainage Reserve.

The Executive was reminded that the Drainage Reserve Fund had originally been set up to respond to significant emergencies. It was reported that some of the reserve funds had recently been used for joint projects with other parties but it was considered that, in future, any such proposals should receive authorisation by the Executive prior to the submission of the funding bid.

Resolved, that

- (i) the proposed Drainage Works Programme for 2014/15 be approved;**
- (ii) subject to the receipt of a DEFRA grant of up to £70,000, watercourse improvements within Lightwater Village be undertaken, with additional funds of up to £40,000 to be met from the drainage reserve;**
- (iii) subject to the receipt of a DEFRA grant of £20,000, modelling of the SH proposed Chobham Village Flood Alleviation Scheme be undertaken, with additional funds of up to £10,000 to be met from the drainage reserve;**
- (iv) subject to the receipt of a DEFRA grant of £20,000, flood alleviation works around the Chobham North catchment area be undertaken, with additional funds of up to £5,000 to be met through the drainage reserve; and**
- (v) in future, funding bids for all projects requiring external funding for drainage works on third party land where this would also require the Council to part fund from the Drainage Reserve be approved by Executive prior to submission of the funding bid.**

34/E Tenancy Strategy

The Executive was reminded that the Localism Act had introduced a new tenancy regime for the social housing sector, replacing the concept of 'tenancies for life' with the ability for Local Authorities and Registered Providers to grant fixed term tenancies, referred to as flexible tenancies.

The Council's current Tenancy Strategy had been reviewed and had been found to still be relevant. It was, however, agreed to add the following statement on the Council's expectations regarding rent setting by Registered Providers to section 9 of the Strategy:

"The Council expects Affordable Rents to be kept within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) levels on the initial letting. Registered Providers are also encouraged to ensure that headroom is allowed when setting the rent that takes into account the different increase mechanisms for rent and LHA i.e. the Provider should be able to demonstrate that the rent will remain within LHA levels for coming years."

Resolved to

- (i) adopt the revised Tenancy Strategy for the period to March 2018, as required by the Localism Act 2011; and**
- (ii) review the Tenancy Strategy on an annual basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose, considering local housing circumstances.**

35/E Update on Local Council Tax Support Hardship Fund For 2013/14

The Executive received an update on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) Hardship Fund and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) for 2013/14. Members were reminded that from 1 April 2013, most working age claimants, unless qualifying for an exemption, had become liable for a minimum of 30% of their Council Tax under the LCTSS.

In May 2013, the Executive had created the LCTSS Hardship Fund and approved a LCTSS Hardship Policy to assist LCTSS claimants having difficulty paying Council Tax. In 2013/14, the Council had provided £10,000 for this Fund and an additional £12,000 had been contributed by Surrey County Council. Of this, £3,092 had been paid out in the year.

In 2013/14 the Council had received 26 applications, of which 11 had been successful. Of those applications which had been unsuccessful, the majority had been rejected because the Council had considered that no evidence of hardship had been presented. The maximum amount awarded to a single claimant was £472. No changes were proposed to the current hardship policy as it was in line with other Surrey districts.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) had provided a grant of £80,872 for DHP, of which £39,500 had been used during the year. During the year 143 applications had been made, of which 74 had been successful. These had primarily been awarded to offset the impact of benefit reform

changes such as the spare room subsidy, housing benefit cap or housing allowance limit. In Surrey Heath 265 claimants had been affected by these reforms. The largest single payment made to a claimant had been £2,669.

The Executive was reminded that, in 2014/15, £10,000 had been budgeted for LCTSS Hardship payments and a grant of £67,857 has been given by the DWP for DHPs.

Concerns were raised by some Members regarding the process for applying for the grant. The Finance Portfolio Holder indicated that he would raise this matter with the Executive Head of Finance.

Resolved, to note the update on the Local Council Tax Support Hardship Fund For 2013/14

36/E House Rules

The Executive was informed that, at its meeting on 5 June 2014, the Joint Staff Consultative Group had considered revised House Rules, which had been updated to take into consideration a smaller, more modern workforce, to make sure the rules were practical, not prohibitive, and were in line with Health and Safety Legislation. The Rules had also been reviewed to ensure they were consistent with guidance from other key policies and procedures and consistent in promoting effective and considerate staff conduct.

The House Rules had been devised to protect Council staff and property, including data for which the Council had responsibility. The Rules had been informed by current legislation and would require regular review to ensure that the guidance remained appropriate and up-to-date in light of subsequent changes.

Recommended, that

- (i) the Council's House Rules be adopted; and**
- (ii) the House Rules be removed from Staff Terms and Conditions**

Chairman