

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Performance
and Finance Scrutiny Committee held at
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House,
Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on 5
December 2018**

- + Cllr Katia Malcaus Cooper (Chairman)
- + Cllr Darryl Ratiram (Vice Chairman)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| + Cllr David Allen | + Cllr Robin Perry |
| + Cllr Bill Chapman | - Cllr Chris Pitt |
| + Cllr Surinder Gandhum | + Cllr Joanne Potter |
| + Cllr Edward Hawkins | Cllr Ian Sams |
| + Cllr Paul Ilnicki | Cllr Wynne Price |
| + Cllr David Lewis | + Cllr Victoria Wheeler |
| - Cllr Max Nelson | + Cllr Valerie White |

- + Present
- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Councillor Gandhum for Councillor Pitt

Councillors in Attendance: Cllr Paul Deach
Cllr Alan McClafferty
Cllr Charlotte Morley

Officers In Attendance: Sarah Bainbridge, Senior Organisational Development Officer
Emily Burrill, Family Support Team Manager
Michelle Fielder, Development management Team Leader
Adrian Flynn, Chief Accountant
Robert Fox, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Julia Hutley-Savage, Principal Lawyer
Karen Limmer, Head of Legal
Kelvin Menon, Executive Head: Finance
Tim Pashen, Executive Head: Community
Richard Payne, Executive Head: Corporate

19/PF Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd October 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20/PF Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

21/PF Portfolio Holder Update: Finance

Councillor Charlotte Morley presented an update on the work carried out to date during the 2018/19 municipal year in her capacity as Executive Portfolio Holder for Finance.

It was noted that pressures on parliamentary time had delayed a Government announcement regarding the Local Government Settlement and more details would be provided as soon as they were available. It was envisaged that the main pressures on the 2019/20 budget would include: inflation, the decrease in funding from Surrey County Council and fluctuations in rental income. It was noted that details of the impact of the changes to business rates would be included in the update given by the Assets Portfolio Holder at a future meeting. However when developing the Council's budget, officers adopted a prudential approach when forecasting the rents expected from town centre properties.

Universal Credit had been launched in Surrey Heath on 28th November consequently it was still too early to ascertain what impact the changes would have on residents. The Council was not responsible for paying the benefit to recipients and therefore had no control over any payment delays. To help mitigate against any delays, officers had undertaken a significant amount of work in the run up to the roll out of Universal Credit to ensure that recipients received everything they were entitled to without undue delay and two weeks full rent was being given to benefits recipients as soon as the notification to stop the housing benefits was received in order to help bridge the gap between the two payment systems.

Arising from members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- Decisions to reduce or stop the provision of any services would be made by the individual departments. It was the responsibility of the Section 151 Officer to ensure that any budget set by the Council was sustainable.
- If the Council received notice of a negative Revenue Support Grant then there were a number of options that the Council could consider in order to balance the budget including: increasing income, cutting services and putting unfunded capital projects on hold.
- The impact of Brexit on the local and national economy had been acknowledged and contingency planning was taking place.

It was requested that any further questions be forwarded to Councillor Morley. The Committee thanked Councillor Morley for her update.

22/PF Portfolio Holder Update: Planning and People

Councillor Alan McClafferty presented an update on the work carried out to date during the 2018/19 municipal year in his capacity as Executive Portfolio Holder for Planning and People.

It was acknowledged that the target for the number of affordable houses built had been missed however it was stressed that whilst the Council could grant planning permission it was dependent on developers to meet the government set targets. Any commuted payments received in lieu of affordable housing were ring fenced for capital improvements in the development's ward.

New legislation that required landlords who were renting a property to five or more people who formed two or more households i.e. Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMO) to apply for a licence had come into force on 1st October 2018. The Council had written to the 129 landlords known to rent out HMOs in the Borough informing them of the need to apply for a licence and visits were taking place to inspect properties to ensure that they met legislative requirements before a licence was issued. If standards weren't met then the Council had the power to prosecute landlords. It was noted that HMOs that did not require licences still had to comply with relevant legislative requirements for example fire

safety legislation. It was confirmed that planning permission was not required to convert a house into a House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) with up to six bedrooms. Legislation relating to HMOs focused primarily on health and safety and did not cover on-site parking provision.

Arising from the Committee's questions and comments the following points were noted:

- There had been a delay in the examination of the Windlesham Neighbourhood Plan due to a change in the Independent Examiner and a subsequent request for additional information. It was expected that a decision on the Plan would be received by the end of the year.
- Work was taking place to identify appropriate transit sites for gypsies and travellers and this would be fed into the Local Plan process.
- It was clarified that the occasional offers for free tickets for shows at Camberley Theatre were used to provide an audience for new and untested performers.
- There was a shortage of planners nationally and this was impacting on the Council's ability to fill vacant posts.

The Committee noted the changes that Surrey County Council was proposing to make to their Children's Services provision and the potential impact that this could have on the Family Support Programme when Government funding ended in 2020. The Committee stressed that the Family Support Service provided an invaluable service to the Borough's residents and that every effort should be made to ensure its services continued to be provided.,

The Committee thanked Councillor McClafferty for his update.

23/PF Mid Year Performance Report

The Committee received the 2018/19 Mid-year Performance Report. The report summarised the Council's performance and the progress made towards meeting the Council's objectives and priorities during the period April to September 2018.

The Committee noted the contents of the mid-year performance report.

24/PF Committee Work Programme

The Committee considered a report setting out its work programme for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

The Committee was informed that the outcome of the recent Call In on proposed changes to parking charges in Camberley town centre car parks had been presented to the Executive at their meeting on 20th November 2018. The Executive had subsequently agreed not to proceed with the proposed charge increases. The Executive had also agreed that, rather than setting up a standalone Task and Finish Group, the Camberley Town Centre Working Group would be tasked with developing a discrete work stream to look at car parking in the town centre holistically. It had also been agreed that Councillors Malcaus Cooper and White would be co-opted onto the Working Group to help develop this work.

It was noted that the proposed agenda for the March 2019 meeting was particularly full and it was agreed that the items would be split between the March meeting and an additional meeting that would be arranged for February.

25/PF Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of Item 9 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

26/PF Performance of the Major Property Acquisitions

The Committee received a report providing an update on the performance of the Council's major property acquisitions.

It was noted that the Council's property portfolio was valued on an annual basis by an independent assessor as part of the budget setting process. It was also noted that discussions with the owners of House of Fraser were ongoing.

The Committee noted the report.

27/PF Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that an additional meeting of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee would be scheduled for early February 2019.

Chairman