

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive
held on 15 September 2020**

+ Cllr Alan McClafferty (Chairman)

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| + Cllr Colin Dougan | + Cllr David Lewis |
| + Cllr Josephine Hawkins | + Cllr David Mansfield |
| + Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans | + Cllr Adrian Page |

+ Present

In Attendance: Cllr Graham Alleway, Cllr Peter Barnett, Cllr Rodney Bates, Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Tim FitzGerald, Cllr Sharon Galliford, Cllr Edward Hawkins, Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath, Cllr Charlotte Morley, Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam, Cllr Robin Perry, Cllr Morgan Rise, Cllr Graham Tapper, Cllr Pat Tedder, Cllr Victoria Wheeler, Cllr Helen Whitcroft and Cllr Valerie White

34/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2020 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

35/E Questions by Members

The Leader responded to a question from Councillor Morgan Rise, advising that the item on a revised scheme for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy funds would be brought to the next meeting. The Leader also undertook to send Councillor Victoria Wheeler a copy of the letter that it had been agreed he would send to the Fire Service at the previous meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor Helen Whitcroft, Councillor Rebecca Jennings-Evans advised that the item on Loman Road Playground later that meeting would include discussions on a proposal for a wheelchair swing in the borough.

A question from Councillor Graham Alleway on the pre-application process for Planning Applications was referred to the Executive Head of Regulatory, as this matter was a non-executive function and it did not therefore fall within the Executive's remit.

36/E Public Space Protection Orders

The Executive considered a report seeking approval for the extension of 3 year extension to the Surrey Heath Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) introduced in 2017.

Details of the review consultation undertaken in July and August 2020 were noted. A total of 41 responses had been received, all but one of which had supported the proposed 3 year extension.

Although during the past 3 years no formal prosecutions had been made, key partners, including Surrey Police, had advised that the orders enabled continuous prevention through engagement. Furthermore, the physical presence of the signage across Surrey Heath was a clear indicator of the enforcement for those who behaved irresponsibly or caused anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Public Space Protection Order be extended for a further 3 year period; and**
- (ii) the Executive Head of Transformation be authorised to introduce operational amendments from the recommendations outlined within Annex B to this report, in consultation with the Support and Safeguarding Portfolio Holder and Surrey Heath Police Commander.**

37/E New permanent site for Gypsy and Traveller pitches

The Executive was informed that a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment undertaken in 2019 had identified a need for 35 new Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 12 new Travelling Showpeople plots in the borough over the next 18 years. Work on the Local Plan had identified sites that could meet this need. The land at Watchmoor Nature Reserve had been identified as a possible site and it was thought it might be able to accommodate 15 pitches and 8 plots; it was therefore proposed to undertake a feasibility study to assess the potential of the land for this use.

Members discussed this proposal and a number of concerns were raised about the location of the proposed site, including air quality issues, noise pollution, flooding, and its situation between a busy road and railway track. Furthermore, there was concern about the removal of this green space and its consequent impact on the Climate Strategy. The value of the amenity of Watchmoor Nature Reserve was also noted. Notwithstanding these concerns, the limited options available to the Council to address Gypsy and Traveller provision within the borough were also recognised.

The Executive reviewed the issues that would be addressed in the feasibility study, as identified in the agenda report, and agreed to add the following additional items to the study:

- Opportunities to buy alternative land, in place of using Watchmoor Nature Reserve
- The value of the amenity of the Nature Reserve
- Any issues of flooding on the site

It was also agreed to conduct a public consultation, to include Gypsy & Traveller groups and the Police, in parallel with the feasibility study.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Executive Head of Regulatory be authorised to undertake an initial feasibility study for provision of a new Traveller site on land at Watchmoor Reserve; and**
- (ii) a public consultation be conducted in parallel.**

Note: It was noted for the record that a number of councillors declared they had received correspondence from residents and the campaign group. It was also noted that several councillors were acquainted with the petition organiser and some councillors had met campaigners at the affected site.

38/E Loman Road Playground

The Executive considered a proposal to draw down £20,000 from the Mytchett & Deepcut Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to add to the £35,000 play improvement scheme it had agreed in March 2017. Due to the size of the facility, the play providers had advised that £35,000 would only provide a limited scheme in the well-used and popular local area of play.

It was reported that there was currently £20,000 available in the ward CIL funds and the ward councillors supported this draw down of additional funds so a new playground could be developed for the local community.

Members were advised that consideration had been given to including a wheelchair swing at Loman Road playground, but Frimley Lodge Park was now considered to be a more suitable site for this facility. It was hoped this could be included in the next tranche of playground refurbishments.

RESOLVED that

- (i) £20,000 be made available to draw down from the Mytchett and Deepcut CIL funds to help refurbish Loman Road play area; and**
- (ii) the implementation of the works be delegated to the Executive Head of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Places and Strategy**

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Capital Programme be increased by £20,000 to fund the works at Loman Road playground.

39/E Changes to the Current Planning System

The Executive considered a draft response to the Government's consultation on short-term changes to current planning policy and regulations. It was advised that a response to the proposed fundamental reform to the planning system, as published in a White Paper, Planning for the Future, would be the subject of a future report.

Members discussed the response to small sites thresholds and it was suggested that an alternative response should be included proposing tax breaks for small and medium sized builders delivering 10-40 units. It was agreed that the wording of this response would be further discussed and delegated to the Executive Head of Regulatory for final decision.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the publication of the Government's Changes to the current planning system consultation be noted;**
- (ii) the detailed response to the consultation questions, as set out at Annex 1 to the agenda report, be agreed; and**
- (iii) the finalisation of the wording be delegated to the Executive Head of Regulatory in consultation with the Leader and Planning & People Portfolio Holder.**

40/E Funds received from the DEFRA Hardship Fund

The Executive was informed that the Council had received a grant of £40,922 from Government's DEFRA Hardship fund of a Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food. The grant could not be used fund services internally, nor for any food provisions funded during lockdown.

Members were reminded that the Council had fully supported Surrey Heath Prepared and its foodbank service this year. It was forecast that the demand for food parcels would increase over the next year from either a second Coronavirus wave, or through the downturn in the economy and increase in unemployment from the fallout from the Pandemic. It was proposed to award the full funding received, to be split between the Camberley Besom and the Woking Foodbank, which incorporated provision for the whole of Surrey Heath.

RESOLVED that

- (i) £29,000 be awarded to Camberley Besom; and**
- (ii) £11,922 be awarded to the Woking Foodbank**

from the DEFRA Hardship funding received by the Council.

Note: It was noted for the record that Councillor Rodney Bates declared that both he and another member of his family were involved in Camberley Besom and he indicated that he would not participate in the discussions on this item.

41/E Zero Based Budgeting

The Executive was informed that, at its meeting on 9 September 2020, the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee had considered a report on proposals for Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) for the 2021/22 financial year. This report had been produced in response to the Council's request at its meeting on

26 February 2020 that proposals for ZBB be prepared and carried out in time for the setting of the 2021/22 budget.

The Committee had recommended that a three year rolling ZBB programme be implemented; a ZBB process would be undertaken during the first year for services that were particularly reliant on income from fees and charges, with incremental budgeting process retained for all other services. This three year rolling programme would enable the methodology to be thoroughly tested, provide an analysis of the cost drivers in those services which needed to attract customers and provide support to those services most at risk from the current Covid-19 pandemic and the associated economic downturn.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that a Zero Based Budget be commenced this autumn for services that are particularly reliant on income from fees and charges, with incremental budgeting process retained for all other services.

42/E Response to the Monitoring Officer's report on the decision to release local land charge over Field 81

The Leader, on behalf of the Executive, presented its response to the Monitoring Officer's report on the decision to release a local land charge over Field 81, Pennypot Lane, Chobham.

43/E Write Off of Irrecoverable Bad Debts

The Executive considered a report seeking authority to write-off irrecoverable revenues bad debts over £1,500. It was advised that all of the debts had been subject to the relevant recovery action and tracing enquiries had been undertaken.

RESOLVED that bad debts totalling £98,916.38 in respect of Council Tax and £41,569.98 in respect of Non-Domestic Rates be approved for write off.

44/E Review of Exempt Items

The Executive reviewed the reports which had been considered at the meeting following the exclusion of members of the press and public, as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information.

RESOLVED that the annex to the agenda report associated with minute 43/E remain exempt.

Chairman