

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Performance
and Finance Scrutiny Committee held at
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House,
Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on 9
March 2022**

+ Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam (Chairman)
+ Cllr Valerie White (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Graham Alleway	+ Cllr Edward Hawkins
+ Cllr Stuart Black	+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram
+ Cllr Vivienne Chapman	+ Cllr Morgan Rise
+ Cllr Sarah Jane Croke	+ Cllr Graham Tapper
- Cllr Paul Deach	+ Cllr Victoria Wheeler
+ Cllr Sharon Galliford	

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

Non-Committee Members in Attendance: Cllr Peter Barnett, Cllr Rodney Bates,

Portfolio Holders in Attendance: Cllr Shaun Garrett, Portfolio Holder: Support & Safeguarding
Cllr Rebecca Jennings-Evans, Portfolio Holder: Places & Strategy
Cllr Robin Perry, Portfolio Holder: Finance

Officers Present: Jayne Boitout, Community Development Officer
Clive Jinman, Housing Services Manager
Louise Livingston, Head of HR, Performance & Communications
Sue McCubbin, Recreation and business Services Manager
Damian Roberts, Chief Executive
Nick Steevens, Strategic Director, Environment & Community
Bob Watson, Strategic Director: Finance and Customer Services

44/PF Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 19th January 2022 and 17th February 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45/PF Declarations of Interest

Cllr Garrett declared an interest in respect of the fact that he was a trustee of Surrey Heath Age Concern, a beneficiary of the Council's grant schemes.
Cllr Croke declared an interest in respect of the fact that she was a trustee of Surrey Heath Age Concern, a beneficiary of the Council's grant schemes.
Cllr Jennings-Evans declared an interest in respect of the fact that her daughter was a beneficiary of the Borough's Free Access for County Sportspeople Scheme

46/PF Executive Portfolio Update: Support and Safeguarding

The Committee received and noted a report summarising the Council's work over the past twelve months which were encompassed by the Support and Safeguarding Portfolio; a portfolio which included work with the voluntary and community sector, the Council's grant

schemes and the Surrey Heath Lottery, community safety, safeguarding, housing and homelessness, disabled facilities grants and family support.

It was confirmed that the closing date for applications to the ward Councillor Grant Fund should be received by midnight on 31st March 2022 to be considered as part of the current financial year's funding allocation. Due to the Bisley and West End Ward By-Election on 14th April the outcome of any applications received between the date of this meeting and the 14th April would not be announced until the 15th April 2022. Any funds not spent by the end of the financial year would be returned to the Council's general revenue budget.

The Council's support of the UK Resettlement Scheme, formerly known as the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and the Afghan Refugee Resettlement scheme was noted. It was clarified that the Council's Family Support Team administered the scheme on behalf of both Surrey Heath and Runnymede Councils and to date 10 families had been resettled across both local authority areas. With regard to the recent invasion of the Ukraine by Russia, the Council was waiting for guidance from the Government in respect of accommodating Ukrainian refugees and assistance would be given if possible. It was stressed that the most difficult aspect of the resettlement programme was securing suitable accommodation.

It was agreed that a list of the organisations receiving support through the Surrey Heath Lottery would be circulated.

It was noted that the Hope Hub received funding through a variety of Council schemes and it was agreed that details would be circulated of all the funding received.

The Committee noted the update.

47/PF Executive Portfolio Update: Places and Strategy

The Committee received and noted a report summarising the Council's work over the past twelve months which were encompassed by the Places and Strategy Portfolio; a portfolio which included recreation and leisure services, greenspaces, contract management, physical activity and health and wellbeing.

The Committee was informed that requirement for personal trainers who wanted to deliver exercise sessions in the Council's parks to hold a Council issued licence had been put in place not only to ensure that trainers held appropriate qualifications and sufficient insurance cover but also so that they contributed towards the cost of maintaining the parks they used. The cost of a licence was not considered to be prohibitive and a sliding scale of fees applied depending on the number of classes being delivered each week and the number of people participating in each class. To increase flexibility and affordability there was also an option for applicants to pay for a licence by direct debit and in stages over the course of the year. At the current time, approximately 20 licences had been issued and the Greenspaces Team monitored use of the parks to ensure that those using them for fitness sessions were licensed.

The delay in refurbishing the Whitmoor Road Play area had been due to the ownership of the land not having been transferred to the Council following the completion of the development. It was confirmed that the work would be undertaken when the transfer of the Title Deeds had been completed and funding of £40,000 had been allocated to the project.

The new Leisure Centre had opened on time and on budget on 1st July 2021. Following the relaxation of pandemic restrictions there had been a significant increase in the

demand for all the services offered and membership had increased month on month since the venue opened. In January 2022, 369 memberships had been taken out taking the total number of memberships that month to 4,367 and Places Leisure, the management group, had reported that this level of membership was the highest in their portfolio.

The analysis of the bookings of the grass tennis courts in Watchetts Recreation Ground had found that they were not being booked with any great frequency and it had been decided to repurpose them to form a fenced socialisation and exercise area for dog walkers on a trial basis. Initial feedback on the new facility had been positive and a decision on whether the facility, along with a similar one at Lightwater Country Park, would be retained would be taken at the end of the three month trial.

It was clarified that the refurbishment of the Watchetts Tennis Courts was being completed in phases to enable residents to continue using the facility while work progressed.

The Council's work with the County Council and the Environment Agency to tackle infestations of Japanese Knotweed across the Borough continued.

48/PF Quarter 3 (October to December 2021) Finance Reports

The Committee considered a report setting out the financial position of the Council at the end of the third quarter (October to December 2021) of the 2021/22 financial year.

It was reported that the Covid-19 pandemic, and the allied Government restrictions, had continued to impact on the Council's finances and the revenue budget was projecting an overspend of £0.893million at the end of the financial year. Areas where significant variance from the agreed budgets lost income from car parking fees, reduced rental income from the Council's investment property portfolio, a loss of income following the suspension of eth garden waste collection service and expenditure on agency staffing to cover vacancies within the finance section.

It was clarified that the Council's contract with Places Leisure to run the new Camberley leisure Centre had been designed such that in the early years the Council paid money to the contractor to help them offset their development costs. As the contract term progressed the amount paid by the Council to the Contractor reduced and the Council started to receive increasing amounts from the Contractor. Initial uncertainties over the ending of the pandemic restrictions and the impacts that these would have on customer levels had resulted in additional funding being put aside in anticipation of a need to support Places Leisure; however once the restrictions had been lifted the take up of memberships and ticket purchases had been much higher than anticipated and Places Leisure had decided that they would not need additional support.

The Committee was informed that £300,000 had been allocated in the 2022/23 budget to cover the cost of rebates to residents who had been subscribers to the garden waste collection service however Joint Waste Solutions was in negotiation with Amey over the payment of compensation for the lack of service.

It was clarified that the budget costs allocated to the Chief Executive stated in the Council Tax leaflet that had been recently published covered the Council's strategic management costs. Whilst costs had increased this reflected in reduced costs in other areas following the restructure of the Council's senior management team as responsibilities had been taken into the central core. It was agreed that this would be clarified on the Council's website.

Following delays in the delivery of the 2021/22 capital programme it would be reviewed to ensure that projects were still viable and that anticipated costs were still within budgeted amounts.

The Committee noted the reports.

49/PF Public Realm Task and Finish Group

The Committee received a report setting out the findings of a review into the overspend for the public realm works in Camberley Town Centre.

Disappointment was expressed that the Task and Finish Group appointed to oversee the review had not had the opportunity to examine the review's findings before they were published and it was agreed the report's recommendations could not be accepted at the current time.

RESOLVED that a meeting of the Task and Finish Group be convened to review the findings before a report is brought back to the Committee for consideration.

50/PF Committee Work Programme

The Committee received and noted a report setting out its work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.

It was noted that an extra meeting could be scheduled to enable discussion of the outcomes of the 'Star Chamber' work to scrutinise the budget.

Chairman