

## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held on 19 September 2023**

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+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald (Chair)

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| + 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: Jayne Boitout, Renee France, Jean Cole, Julia Greenfield, Sue McCubbin, Gavin Ramtohal, Damian Roberts, Eddie Scott, Nick Steevens, Bob Watson, Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Jonny Cope, Cllr Shaun Garrett, Cllr Mary Glauert, Cllr Julie Hoad, Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath, Cllr Lewis Mears, Cllr Liz Noble, Cllr Jonathan Quin, Cllr Pat Tedder, Cllr Victoria Wheeler, Cllr Valerie White and Cllr Richard Wilson

### **22/E Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **23/E Questions by Members**

The Leader of the Council responded to multiple questions in relation to an open letter published on the Surrey Heath Liberal Democrats' media channels on the property acquisitions by a previous administration in 2016 and their implications for the state of the Council finances.

The Leader responded to a question from Councillor Shaun Garrett in relation to the appropriateness of the statement and whether it might have had a negative impact on staff recruitment and retention; and drawing business into the borough. The Leader affirmed that he had sought advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to publication of the statement and stated that he had received advice that it would not be appropriate to publish such a statement on Council channels as it would be politicising the Council.

Councillor Jonny Cope asked whether the Leader would show his workings in relation to the assertions in respect of effective bankruptcy included in the statement and publish all the officer advice he had received in relation to the content of the statement. The Leader confirmed any workings in relation to the assertions included in the statement were covered in the statement's footnotes and that he would revert on the request in respect of making further details available and the advice he had received, public.

Councillor Lewis Mears asked a question to the Leader as to the potential commercial sensitivity of assertions made by Liberal Democrat representative on

social media in respect of the funding of renovations to the former House of Fraser building; and whether it was appropriate for such information to be shared, how it had been obtained and whether in the interest of transparency his response could be circulated in the public domain. The Leader stated he would revert after he sought the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

In addition, following a question from Councillor Lewis Mears, Councillor Alan Ashbery confirmed that a joint South East Councils response to the South Western Railway ticket office closure consultation had been sent; and given the Council's locality, the Council would be providing an individual consultation response to the proposed expansion of Farnborough Airport. It was agreed to send a copy of the South East Council's consultation response relating to ticket closures to Councillor Lewis Mears for reference.

## **24/E Public Space Protection Orders**

The Executive received a report which requested approval of a proposed extension to the Public Space Protection orders (PSPOs) within Surrey Heath for a further 3 year period until 14 October 2026.

Some Members had reservations as to the proposed obligation for dog owners to keep dogs on leads within the PSPO during bird nesting season. It was felt this could encourage people to walk dogs off-lead on common lands. Whilst it was acknowledged that there had already been prior consultation with Surrey County Council, it was agreed to explore options to consult Natural England and Surrey Wildlife Trust in respect of the specific obligation relating to keeping dogs on leads, during ground bird nesting season.

**RESOLVED that the Public Space Protection Order, as set out in Annex A to the agenda report, be retained without change for a further 3-year period until 14 October 2026.**

## **25/E Off Street Car Parking Service**

The Executive considered a report which recommended the postponement of any changes to off-street parking tariffs until a strategic review of off-street parking provision could be conducted.

As part of the Council's Base Budget Review completed in July 2023, the Executive had agreed increases in parking tariffs to contribute to the delivery of the Council's base budget saving targets. Since that time, it had become clear that based on current budget, the higher usage levels being seen across the Council's car parks would generate the income necessary to deliver the additional in-year target, without the need for these interim changes.

Instead, it was proposed that there would be a more strategic and rounded review of the Council's carparks looking at income, tariff structures, levels of usage, future technology, maintenance and required levels of future investment. It was noted that this would include a review by Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee

and would aim to be holistic and take into account the effect of parking provision on volunteering and recreational activities.

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) not to proceed with the original tariff proposals included in the Base Budget Review report considered by the Executive in July 2023;**
- (ii) that an overall parking strategy and action plan be developed for consideration by the Executive and to enable implementation in the new financial year; and**
- (iii) that the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee be asked for their input and feedback on the draft parking strategy and action plan ahead of formal consideration by the Executive.**

### **26/E Energy Strategy**

The Executive considered a proposed Council Energy Strategy which was designed to mitigate the impact of energy price instability whilst also ensuring the organisation's net zero ambitions were met.

The action plan had interventions set across three key themes which covered the Council's operational energy use, support to residents and businesses; and generation of renewable energy.

A significant feature of the strategy was planned actions relating to Surrey Heath House and Camberley Theatre which currently accounted for 50% of building emissions. As such, achievement of net zero would be determined by the Council's future plans for the sites. Removal from the building stock, or moving to energy efficient premises, would lead to large carbon reductions. Otherwise, it was noted that extensive retrofits would need to be considered

Members suggested that Action E8 of the strategy should be strengthened in order to better reflect the need for proactive partnership working with Action Surrey. In response to this it was agreed that officers would work in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to identify how the proposed action would be intensified.

**RESOLVED that the Energy Strategy, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, be adopted.**

### **27/E Litter Bin Replacement Programme**

Following a full review of on streets and parks litter bins, the Executive considered a report detailing the identified requirements for a programme of upgrades and replacements of bin infrastructure in the borough. The project would be joint funded by the Council and Joint Waste Solutions, and would require a successful capital bid of £156,920 for the 2024/25 financial year.

The programme included the introduction of dual stream waste recycling bins and the replacement of a number of the current litter bins which had reached the end of their useable life and were no longer fit for purpose. Furthermore, changes to legislation also negated the need for separation of dog waste which reduced the number of bins which would be provided. The programme would also entail the introduction of the recycling opportunities for bins within the town centre and village centres which would increase the Borough's aspirations to increase its recycling rates.

The Executive was advised that as part of the programme ward councillors would have an opportunity to engage with officers in respect of the bin requirements in their wards and the suitability of locations. Moreover, in multi-member wards all Members of the ward would have a chance to provide their views.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) £156,920 be the subject of a capital bid to be included in the 2024/25 capital programme; and**
- (ii) any changes to the delivery programme be delegated to the Strategic Director for Environment and Community and Portfolio Holder for Net Zero, Well-being & Environment and Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Culture in consultation with the ward councillors.**

**28/E UK Shared Prosperity Fund Year 1 and 2 Projects**

The Executive received a report and related annexes which provided an update on the delivery of projects submitted to Government for the second year (April 23 – March 2024) of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), and proposed projects for Year 3 (April 2024 – 25). Proposed projects included the litter bin replacement programme, as per minute 27/E, Camberley Town Centre public realm enhancements, parks refurbishment programme and a net zero programme, and featured a number of decarbonisation and pro-natural environment initiatives.

It was noted a small typographical error would be addressed which related to the heading in the electronic agenda pack.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (i) the progress made on Year 2 projects funded through the UKSPF, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, be noted;**
- (ii) officers develop project proposals for Year 3 in line with priorities outlined in Annex B to the agenda report;**
- (iii) officers work alongside Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Surrey Heath Partnership to agree funding based on the priorities outlined in Annex B to the agenda report; and**

**(iv) a further report be brought to Executive in December 2023 to approve final project recommendations.**

## **29/E Community Fund Grants**

The Executive considered a report which detailed a Community Fund Grant application to fund Bagshot Business Association to support the Annual Halloween Bagshot Big Bash event.

The association anticipated that the total event cost was £3,000 and the club were seeking up to £1,500 from the Council's Community Fund grant scheme to support traffic management and insurance. A further application for funding had been made to Windlesham Parish Council for £1,000 to cover provision of a road closure, first aid support and entertainment. A decision in relation to the application had not yet been made. The remaining funds would come from Bagshot Business Association reserves.

Members were happy to endorse and grant the application. However, it was remarked that moving forward there was an opportunity to review how the Community Fund Grant Scheme worked.

**RESOLVED that up to £1,500 be awarded to Bagshot Business Association to support the Annual Halloween Bagshot Big Bash event.**

## **30/E Armed Forces Covenant**

The Executive considered a report which set out proposals for the Council to formalise and expand upon this statutory duty by signing the Armed Forces Covenant Pledge; and provided greater detail on how the Council discharged the duty and considered additional voluntary pledges to be made by the Council in support of the Armed Forces Community.

Whilst the Council had signed the Community Covenant in 2013, in 2021 there had been a change to the Community Covenant which then became known as the Armed Forces Covenant. This change had meant that the original pledge was no longer applicable.

In the development of the proposed Armed Forces Covenant pledges, officers had undertaken a number of focus groups which involved members of the Armed Forces Community and Council officers involved in the delivery of services to members of the Armed Forces Community including veterans, their families and dependents. The Council had also identified and appointed an Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Leanne MacIntyre, who had overseen the development of the pledges.

It was noted that the proposed pledges reflected input from these groups, and detailed support already given by the Council to members of the Armed Forces Community alongside pledges for future support and areas of development in the Council's work with members of the Armed Forces Community. The Leader asked for confirmation from across the chamber of their support which was forthcoming.

The Leader thanked members for their unanimous support for this measure as it showed the Armed Forces our shared respect for their service.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) The Covenant pledges be agreed and adopted as set out in paragraph 3.1 to the agenda report; and**
- (ii) a formal signing ceremony be arranged to take place by the end of the financial year at an appropriate and agreed date with members of the council and Armed Forces representatives in attendance.**

**31/E Treasury Management 2023/24 Quarter One Report**

The Executive considered a report which set out the performance of the treasury management service for the first quarter of 2023/24 as of 30 June 2023 and confirmed compliance with the Treasury Management Indicators for 2023/24. This was in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management Code (CIPFA's TM Code), which required that local authorities reported on the performance of the treasury management function at least quarterly.

The Council's total borrowing totalled at £176 million. £76 million of the debt sat as short term debt at an average interest rate of 3.45%; whilst the remaining £100 million was longer term debt which had a weighted average rate of 2.73%. The Council's total treasury investments sat at £15.3 million.

**RESOLVED that the Treasury Management report for the period 1 April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be noted.**

**32/E Exclusion of Press and Public**

In accordance with Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as set out below:

Minute	Paragraph(s)
13 (part)	1 – Information relating to any individual. 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

**33/E Write off of irrecoverable bad debts**

The Executive considered a report seeking agreement to write-off irrecoverable bad debts for Council Tax, Business Rates and Sundry Debtors over £1,500.

It was noted that all of the debts had been subject to the relevant recovery action and tracing enquiries had been undertaken.

**RESOLVED that**

- (i) bad debts totalling £72,599.88 in respect of Council Tax, £85,486.56 in respect of Non-Domestic Rates and £3,555.86 in respect of Sundry Debts be approved for write off; and**
- (ii) the removal of 32 sundry debts totalling £24,357.65 carried out under the scheme of delegated authority by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services, as they are no longer recoverable under the Limitation Act 1980, be noted.**

Chair