

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held on 17 October 2023

+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald (Chair)

+ Cllr Alan Ashbery	+ Cllr Morgan Rise
+ Cllr Kel Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr John Skipper
+ Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke	+ Cllr Helen Whitcroft
+ Cllr Leanne MacIntyre	

+ Present

In Attendance: Cllr Louise Ashbery, Cllr Jonny Cope, Cllr Shaun Garrett, Cllr Julie Hoad, Cllr Sarbie Kang, Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath, Cllr Lewis Mears, Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam, Cllr Liz Noble, Cllr Jonathan Quin, Cllr Murray Rowlands, Cllr Pat Tedder, Cllr Kevin Thompson, Cllr Josh Thorne, Cllr Victoria Wheeler, Cllr David Whitcroft, Cllr Valerie White and Cllr Richard Wilson

34/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

35/E Questions by Members

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Shaun Macdonald responded to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson by expanding on the Council's position on the recent conflict in Israel and reiterating its ongoing support for Jewish and Palestinian residents within the borough.

The Leader responded to a number of questions from Councillors Shaun Garrett, Lewis Mears, Jonathan Quin, Josh Thorne and Victoria Wheeler following his recent statement on the Council's financial position.

Councillor Alan Ashbery, the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Transport & Planning, responded to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson by updating Members on the actions taken in response to concerns about Surrey County Council shutting a footbridge over the M3.

36/E Local Community Project Fund Bids

In October 2020, the Executive had set up the Local Community Improvement Fund for bids to use local CIL funds for the non-parished wards. The Fund pooled the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy contributions to allow wards that did not deliver new development, but did experience its impact, to have access to CIL funding. It also allowed the community to bid for funding for small scale local capital projects.

The Executive considered five applications that had been received during the round of bids open between 3 July and 31 July 2023. These applications related to:

- a. the installation of a Bike Repair Point at High Cross Church in Town ward;
- b. the restoration of Frimley Village Hall in Frimley Green ward;
- c. the refurbishment of the Well Community Centre in Watchetts ward;
- d. the installation of an outdoor gym and 2 picnic tables at Frimley Green Recreation Ground in Frimley Green ward; and
- e. the installation of signage and planters in Deepcut within the Mytchett & Deepcut ward.

It was noted that, as the applicant for the installation of the Bike Repair Point at High Cross Church had been submitted by the Chair of Surrey Heath Liberal Democrats, members of the Executive did not intend to vote on the application and referred it to the Full Council for consideration.

RESOLVED that, in line with the CIL bids detailed in Annex 1 of the agenda report,

- (i) £3,744 be awarded to Frimley Village Hall for the restoration of the Village Hall floor (Bid 2);**
- (ii) £10,462 be awarded to The Well Community Centre for the refurbishment of the Community Centre (Bid 3);**
- (iii) £20,800 (net) be awarded to Frimley Green Recreation Ground for the installation of an outdoor gym and 2 picnic tables (Bid 4); and**
- (iv) £12,400 be awarded to Deepcut Neighbourhood Forum for the installation of signage and planters (Bid 5).**

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that

- (i) a decision be made in respect of awarding £1,500 to High Cross Church for the installation of a Bike Repair Point (Bid 1); and**
- (ii) £20,800 be added to the Council's Capital Programme for the installation of an outdoor gym and 2 picnic tables at Frimley Green Recreation Ground.**

Note 1: In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct Councillor Kel Finan-Cook and Councillor Lisa Finan-Cooke declared non-pecuniary interests as they ran a Warm Hub at the Well Community Centre, the subject of Bid 3. They left the Council Chamber during the consideration of the item.

Note 2: It was noted for the record that

- (i) Councillor Morgan Rise and Councillor Helen Whitcroft declared that they had sent letters of support for the applications in their respective ward; and
- (ii) On behalf of all members of the Executive Councillor Shaun Macdonald declared that they knew the applicant for Bid 1, the installation of a Bike Repair Point at High Cross Church, as he was the Chair of Surrey Heath Liberal Democrats. He informed the meeting that the application would be referred to Full Council for decision.

37/E Residents Panels

The Executive considered a report detailing proposals for introducing Residents Panels. The Panels were intended to bring residents and partner agencies together to examine the big issues facing local residents, improve engagement between the Council, residents and communities, as well as empowering residents and partner agencies to have their voices heard when resolving major issues that impact across the borough. It was intended to link Residents Panels to the Council's established petitions process.

Members noted the eligibility criteria for Residents Panels and were advised that, as the Panels would have to be managed within existing resources, it was proposed to allow a maximum of three Panels within a 12 month period.

RESOLVED that the procedure for residents to apply for and attend a Residents Panel through the petitions process, as set out at the Annex to the agenda report, be adopted by the Council and communicated on the website.

38/E Youth Council Options

The Executive considered a report setting out progress on exploring the options for continuation of the Youth Council and the establishment of a Young Mayor, as requested by the Council at its meeting on 26 July 2023 (minute 24/C refers).

It was reported that there had been limited success to date in securing a new provider for managing the Youth Council, although a meeting would be taking place the following week with a potential provider. Members were advised that, although securing an external provider to run the Youth Council remained the preferred approach, the option to directly employ a youth worker to run the service had not been ruled out.

In relation to the establishment of a Young Mayor, it was suggested that this should be explored separately by the Governance Working Group once the status of the Youth Council had been established at the December Executive meeting as the establishment of the Youth Council and the Young Mayor role overlapped.

RESOLVED that

- (i) officers continue to explore options to identify a potential external supplier to support the Youth Council together with funding**

options and report further progress back to the December Executive Meeting; and

- (ii) the establishment of the Young Mayor be referred to the Governance Working Group for further consideration after the December Executive Meeting, once the outcome to (i) is known.**

39/E Finance Service Stabilisation Review

The Executive considered a report setting out changes proposed to the finance service which were intended to strengthen the Council's financial processes and address the resourcing issues within the Finance Accountancy and Transactions team. The report detailed a revised staffing structure and proposed changes to the Council's financial processes.

Members were informed that the revised structure proposed would see a base budget cost increase of at least £250k, which would be identified as a growth bid as part of the budget setting process in February 2024. It was noted that the proposals were intended to remove reliance on agency staff.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the actions proposed by the Council's Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services (the Chief Finance Officer appointed under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972), set out in the main text of the agenda report and summarised at Annex A to the agenda report be supported;**
- (ii) a budget growth bid on the current establishment of a minimum of £250k be considered as part of the budget process reported to full Council in February 2024; and**
- (iii) the cost of supporting the Council's stabilisation of its finance functions in the current year be noted.**

40/E Property Update

The Executive discussed a report setting out the current and projected income and costs associated with the Council's Property Portfolio including some of its major retail acquisitions.

RESOLVED to note

- (i) the findings of the agenda report;**
- (ii) the cost of debt financing and repayment funded by the income generated by the Council's property portfolio and any surplus/deficits therein; and**

(iii) that this type of analysis and reporting will be adopted in future annual performance reports on property related activities to the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee.

41/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)
42/E	3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

42/E Contract Update

The Executive received an update on a contractual matter.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

Chair