

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive
held on 21 November 2023**

+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald (Chairman)

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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

In Attendance: Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Shaun Garrett, Cllr Nirmal Kang, Cllr Sarbie Kang, Cllr Lewis Mears, 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

43/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

44/E Public Question Time

The Leader of the Council answered questions on behalf of the Committee in-line with Part 4, Section E of the Council's Constitution. In line with the Constitution, the questions and answers were published as part of a supplement to the meeting's agenda pack.

45/E Questions by Members

The Leader of the Council responded to questions relating to the Council's Section 151 Officers' attendance at the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee meeting at the House of Commons on 13 November 2023.

Councillor Shaun Garrett asked the Leader whether the Section 151 Officer's statement that the Council was 'not in immediate financial distress', was in conflict with his own previous statement. The Leader confirmed that there was no conflict, as his statement had highlighted the risk of effective potential bankruptcy in the future. He suggested that there could be different interpretations of the term immediate when referring to the Council's financial situation.

In response to Councillor Jonathan Quin's question in relation to the Section 151 Officer's comment in respect of greater presentation of homelessness in the borough, the Portfolio Holder for Inclusion and Housing agreed to provide up to date figures on homelessness and housing cases to the Member in due course.

Councillor Richard Wilson highlighted the urgency as to a resolution of the closure of the footbridge over the M3, which linked Bagshot and Lightwater, and asked for an update in respect of this. The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Transport and Planning advised that a night closure of the M3 Motorway was scheduled for between 8 December to 11 December in order to carry out the works to demolish the existing footbridge which was deemed to be unsafe, and that contact had been made with Surrey County Council to ensure that protection barriers were repaired on the M3/A322 junction before the works started.

46/E Corporate Peer Challenge

The Executive considered a report which outlined the background to a Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) and shared the key recommendations contained within the published report, and set out an action plan in response to be agreed by the Executive.

Peer Challenge was an established sector-led improvement tool initiated by the Local Government Association (LGA), which involved a team of experienced officers and members who understood the challenges and opportunities which faced local government. Reviewers spent time in another council as 'peers' to provide constructive feedback and share learning. Whilst a Peer Challenge was not mandatory, the LGA encouraged Councils to take up this offer as undergoing a Peer Challenge every few years was an effective tool for independent challenge and improvement and ensured Councils had a sense of collective responsibility for performance in the sector as a whole. The purpose of this exercise was to help councils identify areas for improvement, or endorse areas they were already working on.

As a product of the review, the report included a number of observations and suggestions which were distilled down into nine key recommendations to the Council for further development; many of which were already being implemented at the time of the challenge:

- **Recommendation 1** – Develop a financially sustainable budget, including scenario planning for regeneration options.
- **Recommendation 2** – Complete a review of governance and develop and action plan encompassing risk management, project management and procurement.
- **Recommendation 3** – Develop a future engagement plan with partners.
- **Recommendation 4** – Enhance the role of Scrutiny – use it to its full potential, actively engaging members.
- **Recommendation 5** – Create a continuous member development plan, informed by members, to support them in their roles.
- **Recommendation 6** – Ensure Climate Net-Zero was integrated into the Council's culture and appropriately resourced.
- **Recommendation 7** – Develop an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training plan including all protected characteristics.
- **Recommendation 8** – Make improvements to the working environment at Surrey Heath House.
- **Recommendation 9** - Develop a digital vision that reflects engagement with staff and residents.

The report and attached annex, proposed a number of actions to address the recommendations. It was noted that the Peer Team would return to the Council for a progress 'check in' session in April 2024 to discuss and review progress in delivery of the action plan and other improvements.

RESOLVED that the Peer Challenge Action Plan as set out at Annex A to the agenda report be agreed.

47/E Quality Management Approach

The Executive considered a report which set out details of a previous review into the applicability of ISO 9001 (a recognised quality management system) and the subsequent resolution of the Council in February 2022 that *“the key principles that underpin the ISO 9001 and related quality and customer services standards, are used to inform the Council’s approach to delivering improved performance and customer focus across the organisation”*

It was proposed that the existing quality management provision was extended and that there was a continuous improvement approach through a series of service reviews, based on a bespoke best-practice toolkit.

During the discussions the Executive highlighted the opportunity for the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee’s input and feedback on the developing Service Review toolkit.

RESOLVED that

- (i) there be continued support for the resolution of the Council in February 2022 that stated *“the key principles that underpin the ISO 9001 and related quality and customer services standards, are used to inform the Council’s approach to delivering improved performance and customer focus across the organisation”*;**
- (ii) a series of service reviews be undertaken based on a bespoke internal toolkit based on two reviews being completed each year; these will be included in the relevant Annual Plan and four reviews will be completed in total over 2024/25 and 2025/26; and**
- (iii) the Council does not seek ISO 9001 certifications across additional functions, or the whole Council.**

48/E Mid Year Performance Report

The Executive considered a report which summarised the progress of the Council in the first half of 2023/24 against its corporate objectives and priorities set out in the Annual Plan. The report also covered the objectives and priorities set out in the

Short-term Plan agreed by the new Council following the elections in May and June 2023 covering the period between July and December 2023.

The Executive also considered an annex which detailed the feedback and suggestions of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED to note the Short-Term Plan update at Annex A to the agenda report, the Mid Year Progress Report at Annex B to the agenda report and the comments and observations from the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee at Annex C to the agenda report.

49/E Appropriation and transfer of land at The Green, Frimley Green

The Executive considered a report which detailed a Section 106 Agreement, which related to the residential led redevelopment of the Princess Royal Barracks site in Deepcut and prohibited the construction of more than 600 dwellings (unless otherwise agreed with Surrey Heath Borough Council and Surrey County Council) until the applicant has entered into a highways agreement in respect of the highway works.

In order to facilitate the highway works, which included the widening of the road, a small area of common land owned by Surrey Heath Borough Council located at The Green in Frimley Green (“the Land”) needed to be appropriated for the benefit, improvement and development of the area and subsequently transferred to Surrey County Council.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the common land at the Green in Frimley Green, as identified at Annex A to the agenda report, be appropriated for the benefit, improvement and development of the area; and**
- (ii) the disposal of the Land to Surrey County Council for no purchase price to facilitate highway improvement works required in connection with the residential led redevelopment of the Princess Royal Barracks site in Deepcut be agreed.**

50/E Revenue Budget 2023/24 Monitoring Report - Quarter 2

The Executive considered a report which provided a high-level view as to the budget and financial performance for the first quarter of 2023/24 – accounting period ending 30 September 2023.

The Executive noted the comments following consideration by the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee and recognised that the Council was currently showing a small underspend against profiled budgets to the end of Quarter 2 (30 September 2023). However, services were predicting a year-end forecast outturn of £411k overspend (adverse variance).

It was advised that work had been conducted as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25 to determine the correct capital financing requirement, the appropriate

level of minimum revenue provision and to confirm the debt interest position. The result of this work had found that the minimum revenue provision, based on capital financing requirement, would increase by approximately £300,000.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the spend against the approved revenue budget for the period 1 April to 30 September 2023 and the predicted forecast of full year outturn be noted; and**
- (ii) the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and Heads of Service be asked, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, to take appropriate action to keep the overall net expenditure within the agreed limits for the working budget by the end of the financial year.**

51/E Capital Budget 2023/24 Monitoring Report - Quarter 2

The Executive considered a report which provided a summary of the Council's progress against the 2023/24 capital programme and budget for the first half of the financial year (FY), the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

The report detailed that at the end of Quarter 2 the total spend and commitments to spend were £2.209 million against an approved budget of £13.219 million, which amounted to 16.7%. There is a forecast underspend for the year of £7.800 million of which £7.563 million was proposed to be reprofiled into future years.

It was acknowledged the by the Executive that the majority of projects which were to be reprofiled to later years relate to Property and Economic Development initiatives, where it could be seen that of the £7.800 million reprofiled, £7.411 million related to four schemes. Furthermore, members of the Executive noted the comments of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 15 November 2023, which were published as a supplement.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the spend against the approved capital programme for the period 1 April to 30 September 2023 be noted; and**
- (ii) the proposed reprofiling of budgets to future years be agreed.**

52/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)
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- 53/E 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
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53/E Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

The Executive considered a report seeking approval to proceed with the acquisition of a site identified in the exempt agenda report for the purpose of providing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace; the acquisition had been approved by the Executive on 14th March 2023 and authority had been delegated to the Head of Investment and Development to purchase the site.

The report which had been now considered by the Executive detailed that the appropriate legal, environmental and technical due diligence work had now been undertaken; including further work, which had been completed on the proposed SANG design and its access points.

It has been identified that the unadopted access road to the proposed main car park site would likely require repairs or resurfacing works at some point within the next couple of years. Furthermore, there was a covenant on the title of part of the Property that obliged the owner of that land to contribute towards the maintenance costs of this road.

It was acknowledged by the Executive that the scope of works is unlikely to be clarified for another year. However, financial provision would need to be made for the cost of resurfacing the road.

Following discussion, the Executive agreed to proceed with the acquisition as per the agreed heads of terms with acknowledgement that there would be additional ongoing road maintenance costs that would be recovered through the SANG tariff and be funded through the existing Community Infrastructure Levy ('CIL') SANG reserve.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The acquisition of site identified in Annex 2 to the agenda report on the basis of the heads of terms set out continue; and**
- (ii) Further funding be allocated within the CIL SANG budget to allow for road maintenance and repairs.**

54/E Maintenance of Property

The Executive considered a report which sought approval to budget for the continued programme of roof replacement works that had commenced in Spring 2023 and also other planned preventative maintenance works to future proof the

infrastructure of The Square Shopping Centre. The proposed works schedule of works was noted.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the capital sums set out and in blue in Table 2 of the agenda report be put forward to form a capital bid and incorporated into the budget for 2024/25, to be presented to Full Council in February at the Budget review meeting; and**
- (ii) to note that the sum of budgeted major works items across the 5 years that are recoverable via the service charge regime.**

Chair