

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive
held on 13 February 2024**

+ 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

- Apologies for absence presented

* In attendance virtually but did not vote

In Attendance: Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Jonny Cope, Cllr Shaun Garrett, Cllr Mary Glauert, Cllr Julie Hoad, Cllr Nirmal Kang, Cllr Sarbie Kang, Cllr Rob Lee, Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath, Cllr Lewis Mears, Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam, Cllr Liz Noble, Cllr David O'Mahoney, Cllr Murray Rowlands, Cllr Pat Tedder, Cllr Kevin Thompson, Cllr David Whitcroft, Cllr Valerie White and Cllr Richard Wilson

71/E Moment of Silence

A minute's silence was held in memory of residents of the borough affected by a fatal car accident earlier that week.

72/E Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

73/E Questions by Members

The Inclusion & Housing Portfolio Holder, Councillor Lisa Finan-Cooke, responded to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson confirming the Council's support for transgender residents of the borough in light of the recent release of information concerning the murder of Brianna Ghey. She also extended the Council's sympathies to Brianna's family.

Councillor Alan Ashbery, the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Transport & Planning, responded to a question from Councillor Shaun Garrett about the potential for accidents to be caused due to bad parking near the shops in Old Dean. It was advised that contacts would be made at both Member and Officer levels to ask Surrey County Council to increase parking enforcement patrols in the area.

In response to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson about replacing the playground at Whitmoor Road, Bagshot, the Leisure & Culture Portfolio Holder, Councillor John Skipper, informed Members that this Council would proceed with a replacement play park once the necessary processes with Surrey County Council were complete.

Following a question from Councillor Shaun Garrett, the borough's recycling figures were noted and thanks were extended to those who had been involved in helping the targets to be achieved.

The Net Zero, Wellbeing & Environment Portfolio Holder, Councillor Morgan Rise, responded to a question from Councillor Richard Wilson by updating the meeting on enforcement of fly tipping.

74/E Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Executive considered a report setting out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the revenue budgets estimates for the 2024/25 financial year, and the indicative estimates for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28. The MTFS also incorporated a 4-year capital strategy and programme, plus a Treasury Management Strategy. It was noted that the budget reflected a proposal for the Council's element of the annual council tax precept to be increased by 2.99% across all Council Tax Bands.

Members were reminded that, over the past few years the Council had applied some of its reserve balances to support regeneration and delivery of services to the local residents and businesses; however, this was not sustainable in perpetuity and as such the MTFS contained a savings and efficiencies target to balance the budget by keeping within the financing resources available. These targets would be met from a combination of further service efficiencies, looking at ways of increasing income, and potential non-statutory service reductions.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated Revenue Budget Estimates covering the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 as set out at the updated Annex A to the agenda report and its appendices, be agreed, including:

- (i) approving the Revenue Budget Estimates covering the period 2024/25 to 2027/28 by:**
 - a. agreeing the 2024/25 budget estimates giving a net cost of services revenue budget for the Council of £17.347 million as shown in Appendix 1 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**
 - b. agreeing the unavoidable service pressures and budget growth of £4.723 million shown in Appendix 1 and in more detail in Appendix 1-1 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**
 - c. agreeing the revenue efficiencies of £4.525 million shown in Appendix 1 and in more detail in Appendix 1-2 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**
 - d. approving the recommendation by the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services (the Council's Section 151 Officer) that a sum of up to £2.500 million of the interest equalisation earmarked reserve be drawn to support the**

revenue budget over the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and provide a sustainable budget for the Council;

- e. agreeing that the Surrey Heath Borough Council element of the annual council tax precept be increased by 2.99% across all Council Tax Bands;
- (ii) agreeing the Capital Strategy, as set out at Appendix 2 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and associated Capital Programme (appendix 2-1) covering the period 2024/25 to 2027/28, including:
- f. agreeing the new capital bids for £9.539 million in Appendix 2 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 be approved, and that they be incorporated into the Capital Programme;
 - g. reprofiling previous budgets into 2024/25 to 2027/28 as detailed in Appendix 2-1 amounting to £1.118 million in 2024/25;
 - h. approving the Prudential Indicators summarised below and explained in Appendix 2 for 2024/25 to 2026/27 in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2011:

Prudential Indicator	2024/25 Proposed £m	2025/26 Estimated £m	2026/27 Estimated £m	2027/28 Estimated £m
Capital Expenditure	10.871	4.292	2.280	2.450
Capital Financing Requirement	209.7	210.2	210.7	211.2
Ratio of net financing costs to net revenue stream	0.57	0.62	0.61	0.62
Financing Costs	8.42	8.50	8.52	8.54
Operational Boundary	230	230	230	230
Authorised Limit	237	237	237	237

- (iii) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 shown at Appendix 3, Annex A to the Medium Term Financial Strategy be agreed, including;

- i. the Treasury Management Indicators for 2024/25 at Appendix 3, Annex C to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;

- j. the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement and estimated minimum revenue provision payment table at Appendix 3, Annex F to the Medium Term Financial Strategy; and**
- k. the Treasury Management Policy Statement at Appendix 3, Annex G to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.**

RESOLVED to note:

- (i) the forecast level of reserve balances shown at Appendix 4 to the Medium Term Financial Strategy; it should further be noted that these will be subject to confirmation once the outturn position for the current financial year (2023/24) is known and this will be reported in the revenue outturn report early in the new financial year;**
- (ii) the Council Tax base for Surrey Heath Borough Council is 39,749.5 as set at the Executive meeting on 5 December 2023;**
- (iii) the Medium Term Financial Strategy contains a savings target of £0.600 million over the period of the strategy which will be achieved through a combination of further services efficiencies, increases in income and potentially service reductions to be identified through a output-based budget review for all services of the Council and subject to a base budget review that will commence in the summer of 2024; and**
- (iv) the statement of the Chief Financial Officer (Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services) on the robustness of estimates and sustainability of balances; and**
- (v) the finance settlement from the Government was finalised through the House of Commons on 5 February 2024.**

Note: it was noted for the record that,

- (i) in relation to the capital grants set out in the Capital Programme, Councillor Shaun Garrett declared that he was a member of the Old Dean Bowling Club; and**
- (ii) in relation to funding for clubs and bodies, Councillor Murray Rowlands declared that he was an Executive member of Camberley Job Club.**

75/E Council Strategy

The Executive considered a new draft Council Strategy for 2024 – 2028. The Strategy sought to build on the objectives in the previous Five Year Strategy.

The five priorities identified in the new draft Strategy were:

- Protect our Environment
- Promote Healthier and More Inclusive Communities
- Support a Strong Economy and Create More Homes
- Campaign for Residents
- Deliver Effective Services with Sustainable Finances

The Strategy would be delivered each year through a set of more detailed actions and targets agreed in the Annual Plan.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that the Council Strategy 2024 – 2028 at Annex A to the agenda report be adopted.

76/E Draft Annual Plan 2024/25

The Executive considered the proposed Annual Plan for 2024/25, which set out the key projects and performance indicator targets for the next financial year. The Annual Plan was the main delivery vehicle for ensuring that the ambitions in the Council's overarching strategy are delivered for residents and the borough. The draft plan had been considered by the Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in January and its comments had been incorporated.

RESOLVED that the Annual Plan for 2024/25, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, be agreed, subject to the approval of the annual budget 2024/25 at Full Council on 21 February 2024.

77/E Parking Strategy

The Executive was reminded that, in September 2023 it had determined that prior to any commitment to increase parking tariffs, a Car Parking Strategy would be developed to set out the Council's aspirations for its car parks and determine where improvements could be made to enhance customer experience. The Parking Strategy was intended to bring about a more strategic and rounded review of the Council's car parks looking at income, tariff structures, levels of usage, future technology, maintenance and required levels of future investment.

Members were informed that one of the core principles of the Strategy was that across the borough as a whole, the portfolio of car parks should be financially sustainable, therefore self-funding and avoiding the need for Council subsidy. Changes to the tariffs were intended to fund the investment required to address any necessary maintenance and introduce Preventative Planned Maintenance plans. In addition, the Strategy set out plans for safer, cleaner, car parks with better signage and marking and easier contactless payments.

The schedule of proposed changes to tariffs was noted, including a reduction from one hour to 30 minutes free parking in Pay on Foot car parks, excluding Chobham due to it providing parking for Chobham Water Meadows Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace. It was also proposed to introduce car parking tariffs in Wilton Road car park.

The Strategy had been considered by the Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee in January 2024 and the revisions made following the meeting, including correcting inconsistency regarding Sunday charges, were noted.

Members discussed the proposals and the results of the consultation that had been conducted. It was noted that two petitions concerning elements of the Strategy had recently been made live for signing on the Council's website. Feedback reported by residents was also shared, including concerns about the impact of the proposed reduction to 30 minutes free parking in pay on foot car parks.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Parking Strategy, as set out in Annex 1 to the agenda report, be adopted;**
- (ii) the amendments to the parking tariffs for existing car parks, as set out in page 25 of Annex 1 to the agenda report, be approved with effect from 1st April 2024;**
- (iii) the proposed introduction of car parking tariffs in Wilton Road car park be introduced from 1st July 2024 following the completion of the statutory Traffic Regulatory Order process and after review and consideration of any feedback received; and**
- (iv) the final implementation of these proposals be delegated to the Strategic Director for Environment and Community in consultation with the Resident & Community Services Portfolio Holder, following the completion of the necessary statutory processes.**

78/E Review of Grant Schemes

The Executive was reminded that, at its meeting on 16 January 2024, it had agreed to award several revenue grants, along with transitional funding to end the provision of two revenue grants, for a range of organisations, based on proposed changes to the Ward Councillor Grant and Community Fund Grant being approved at a future date.

Members considered a report containing proposals to review and amend the criteria of the Council's Lottery Grant, Ward Councillor Grant, and Community Fund Grant. It was noted that the Ward Councillor Grant Scheme budget would be reduced from £52,500 to £35,000 per annum, with the £17,500 reallocated to support the annual Revenue Grants. As a result, each councillor would have £1,000 per year to allocate in line with the Scheme.

RESOLVED that the grant policy and criteria of the three grant schemes be amended as set out at paragraph 2 of the agenda report.

79/E Review of Planning Services Fee Charges 2024/25

The Executive considered a report setting out proposed increases to fees for the Planning and Building Control services. The proposals included continuing the fast-track planning application service and expanding it to include minor developments. It also introduced fees for general enquiries and administrative fees for paper handling and invalid applications. New Building Control administrative fees would be introduced for archive records, Demolition Notices and Exempt Building Work Certificates. These changes would be applied from 1 April 2024.

Members were advised that the changes had been proposed to ensure that the department continued to deliver the best possible customer service with clear expectations for the public. Income generation as a result of these changes would enable the service to reinvest the resource and support the wider council objectives.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) The pre-application charging schedule be increased by 25% for non-major proposals and 35% for major proposals and takes effect from 1 April 2024;**
- (ii) The existing fast-track planning application service continues and, subject to piloting, from 1 April 2024 is expanded to include minor developments;**
- (iii) General enquiries fees and administrative fees for paper handling and invalid planning applications be introduced and take effect from 1 April 2024;**
- (iv) Planning performance agreements are standardised and better promoted with a clear fee structure, template agreement and improved web content;**
- (v) Building Control fees be increased by 53% to take effect from 1 April 2024; and**
- (vi) Building Control administrative fees are introduced for archive records, Demolition Notices and Exempt Building Work Certificates.**

80/E ANPR Procurement

The Executive was informed that the current automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) car park control and management system for Main Square and Knoll Road car parks had been installed on 2 June 2014, with a maximum contract for maintenance and software support of 10 years. A procurement exercise had been undertaken to procure a new system and approval was sought to award the Car Park Management System contract to the successful tenderer.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the issue of intention to award the contract to tenderer 2 for a period of ten years commencing on 3 June 2024 with the option for the council to extend for a further two years be approved; and**
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Strategic Director for Environment and Community in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resident & Community Services to award the contract following the 10-day statutory standstill period.**

81/E 43-57 Park Street (the House of Fraser building), Camberley

The Executive considered a report seeking approval to progress the removal of asbestos in the former House of Fraser building at 43-57 Park Street, Camberley, which was owned by the Council.

It was advised that the removal of asbestos by specialist contractors would be required regardless of the future use of the building. Furthermore, the assessment of the future use of the building was inhibited by the presence of asbestos as surveyors would not undertake detailed building condition, mechanical and electrical and measured surveys until it had been removed due to the health and safety risk. Therefore, in order to present more robust costs associated with different options for future use of the building, the removal of asbestos and undertaking of the surveys was necessary.

The proposed works comprised the removal of asbestos from all vacant areas and the potential selective repair or full replacement of the roof. A decision on whether to replace the roof would be made once the asbestos had been removed, survey work undertaken on its condition, and financial analysis of the selected options updated.

RESOLVED that, subject to the agreement of the budget by the Full Council

- (i) authority be delegated to the Head of Property and Economic Development in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Performance and Finance and the Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services (Chief Finance Officer) to:**
 - a) enter into a contract for the necessary work to remove asbestos from 43-57 Park Street, Camberley, and necessary associated works, including contract award for the procured supplier;**
 - b) Following removal of the asbestos, instruct appropriate physical survey and assessment of the roof and other areas to enable procurement of updated cost plans for the re-use of the building;**
 - c) As deemed appropriate following detailed surveys and cost estimations, instruct the appropriate repair and replacement**

works to keep the building wind and watertight, particularly the roof;

d) Control the release of all contingency amounts allocated to the project; and

(ii) officers report back to the Executive on the proposed future use of the building, once the asbestos has been removed and survey work undertaken allowing assessment, with more accurate cost estimates for the feasible options for the re-use of the building.

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that a new capital bid of £3.5M be approved to

(i) Undertake enabling works including asbestos removal, and potentially roof repairs or replacement to 43-57 Park Street, Camberley; and

(ii) Progress with further physical surveys, once the asbestos has been removed, and update the plans for the shortlisted options with more robust cost estimates.

Chair