

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Performance and Finance Scrutiny
Committee held at Surrey Heath House
on 22 March 2017**

+ Cllr Alan McClafferty (Chairman)
+ Cllr Jonathan Lytle (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Dan Adams	+ Cllr Max Nelson
+ Cllr David Allen	+ Cllr Robin Perry
+ Cllr Bill Chapman	+ Cllr Chris Pitt
+ Cllr Edward Hawkins	+ Cllr Darryl Ratiram
+ Cllr Paul Innicki	+ Cllr Victoria Wheeler
+ Cllr David Lewis	+ Cllr Wynne Price
+ Cllr Oliver Lewis	

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

In Attendance: Cllr Mrs Vivienne Chapman, Cllr Charlotte Morley and Cllr Conrad Sturt.

29/PF Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting and in particular welcomed Councillors Mrs Vivienne Chapman and Charlotte Morley, the Community and Regulatory Portfolio Holders respectively, plus Louise Livingston, the Executive Head of Transformation and Jenny Rickard, the Executive Head of Regulatory Services who were attending to assist Members in their discussions.

The Chairman reminded Members that the Committee had requested written submissions from Portfolio Holders, to be circulated with agendas and that Members would be asked to submit as many questions as possible in advance of the meeting. A number of questions had been submitted and the Portfolio Holders would address these as part of their presentations.

Although the Purdah period for the Surrey County Council elections would not officially begin until the following day, the Chairman reminded Members of the need to avoid electioneering, going forward.

30/PF Minutes

The open minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7 December 2016, were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

31/PF Scrutiny of Portfolio Holder - Regulatory

Councillor Charlotte Morley, the Regulatory Portfolio Holder, reminded Members of the key functions covered by her Portfolio. She noted that, whilst she could address strategic issues, it would not be possible to discuss individual cases in the open part of the meeting.

In the course of discussion, the following issues were raised:

Enforcement - Members asked questions on enforcement arrangements and in particular in respect of:

- (i) The workload/extensive number of enforcements covered by one Enforcement Officer , including the number of enforcement issues which were outstanding;
- (ii) The workload of the Council's Arboricultural Officer;
- (iii) The way in which enforcement was prioritised for different types of enforcement;
- (iv) The training that officers received, particularly in respect of rural area issues;
- (v) The frequency with which the Enforcement Policy was reviewed and timescales for a review of the current policy; and
- (vi) Concerns that enforcement across the Borough was considered to be less than satisfactory.

Councillor Morley reminded Members that the Council had agreed a Local Enforcement Plan in September 2014, which reflected the resources agreed, as part of an earlier restructure. A further review was not proposed at this time.

The Local Enforcement Plan included a set of priorities for types of enforcement action, which reflected, at least in part, the resources available. As a result, the current approach sought to make best use of resources available, by seeking assistance from Corporate Enforcement Officers and the Contact Centre. Planning Officers were also key to enforcement processes. Councillor Morley agreed to explore the possibility of an increased role for the Contact Centre.

The Council recruited trained Planning Officers and gave them any necessary local familiarisation/training in both rural and urban areas, according to the needs of the individual officers. Planning Officers took professional qualifications and were mentored by senior officers. A newly introduced ICT package would enable access for planning/enforcement officers to Council systems whilst out on site.

The Council took enforcement action through the courts where appropriate and a number of current cases were in the judicial process already.

Councillor Morley noted that a number of the questions submitted in advance of the meeting had been specific and related to particular Council Wards. She reported that she would respond directly to these questions and urged Members to contact her on Ward specific issues.

Members expressed continued concerns over the performance of the enforcement function and it was proposed that the Executive be asked to review the resources for Planning enforcement, with a view to substantially improving this service.

Key Workers – A shortage of suitable key-worker housing had been identified in the Borough, with both Health and Social Care managers reporting severe difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff.

Councillor Morley reported that Key Worker accommodation was being considered as part of the work of the Local Plan Working Group. The Working Group would report its findings to the Executive in due course.

Homelessness Reduction Bill – Recognising the potential impact of this emerging legislation, Members queried what steps the Council was proposing for homeless people and the challenges facing the Council in this respect.

Councillor Morley explained that the “Team around the Person Team” was working with individuals who were homeless, providing one-to-one assistance to enable them to engage with agencies which could help. This had proved such a success that the Homelessness Grant for 2017/18 would be used to continue its funding.

The Council had, so far, this year, provided 26 nights of accommodation for rough sleepers, because weather conditions had been so poor. Further support was being considered for the range of homeless persons in the Borough, which included rough sleepers, vulnerable/at risk people and sofa-surfers. The Homelessness Reduction Bill would give Councils greater responsibilities to work with vulnerable people who were currently not within the organisation’s responsibility.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Charlotte Morley for her detailed answers to the wide ranging questions from Members in relation to her Portfolio.

Resolved, that the Committee expresses its concern about and advises the Executive to review the Planning Enforcement function, focussing in particular on resource and budgetary implications, with the objective of substantially improving this service.

32/PF Scrutiny of Portfolio Holder - Community

Councillor Mrs Vivienne Chapman, the Community Portfolio Holder, had submitted a report highlighting key areas for her Portfolio and ongoing issues.

Green Waste Club - In response to a number of queries on the Green Waste Club, going forward, Councillor Mrs Chapman highlighted the following:

The Council’s contract with Biffa would end in February 2018, when the new joint contact with Amey would commence.

Biffa currently ran the Green Waste Club and arrangements had been made for a seamless transfer so that participating households would not experience any change. However, Biffa had now written to all Green Waste Club members seeking to retain their custom and asking members to pay in advance, for a new contract with Biffa for 2018.

Agreement had already been reached between the Council and Amey for that company to take over green waste arrangements. In effect, Biffa would be using new contracts agreed with existing members to collect commercial waste which would not be processed by Surrey County Council or Surrey Heath facilities.

Residents taking up the Biffa offer would be without Council or Amey support if anything went awry.

A clear message to this effect had been issued in the recent edition of Heathscene and this message would also be conveyed on the Council's web pages. Other steps to address this issue and the legal implications of Biffa's actions would also be considered.

Street Cleansing – Members queried the scope of the survey which indicated that 96% of streets had been graded A or B, expressing concerns about the status of some roads in the Borough, including the area around Frimley Park Hospital and Station Road under the A322 By-Pass. Councillor Mrs Chapman confirmed that the survey was Borough-wide, but that she would take on board the comments raised and discuss those with the Council's contractor. When residents called about a litter issue, the Council had a team which could react to one-off litter issues. However, neither the Council nor its contractor were authorised to enter private properties to remove litter.

Councillor Mrs Chapman reported that, when there was a requirement to clear highway land adjacent to dual carriageways, this Council had to liaise closely with both Surrey and Hampshire County Councils, as Highways Authorities, as, where possible, verge cleaning of dual carriageways was combined with sorting potholes and defective street lighting.

Community Services – Councillor Mrs Chapman briefed the Committee on developments in Community Services and in particular, partnership work with Runnymede Borough Council, including a shared manager and a range of far-reaching initiatives on dementia. In 2017/18, the Council would build on its partnership with Runnymede Borough Council, SCC Adult Social Care and the Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group, to strengthen and develop new services for the community.

One recent initiative included a pilot study introducing integrated health management through various forms of technology in the homes of people with moderate dementia and a carer on site. Half of the households in the pilot will have technological aids introduced and a comparison will be made between those with and without this assistance.

The Service would also introduce, in the summer of 2017, a respite service in the Windle Valley Centre for 8 clients, plus up to 2 emergency clients each day when required. This recognised that both cared for and carers need assistance.

The Council was working in partnership with Surrey County Council, the Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group and Frimley Park Hospital on a package for people returning home after being discharged from the hospital. These measures included providing an emergency telephone for a week, free food for 48 hours through Meals at Home and a code dial on the front door. Various follow-up services could also be provided at the clients' request.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs Vivienne Chapman for her detailed answers to Members' questions and her briefing, particularly on innovative developments in Community Services.

Resolved, that the presentation be noted.

33/PF Annual Plan 2017/18

The Committee considered a report on the Council's Five Year Strategy and the Annual Plan for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. The Strategy had been agreed by the Council in August 2016 and had subsequently been refreshed. Both the Strategy and Plan had previously been considered by the Executive on 7 March 2017.

In response to questions submitted prior to the meeting, the following information was reported to the Committee:

- (i) Consultants had already been engaged to work up proposals to take forward the refurbishment and rebranding of the Mall shopping centre in Camberley
- (ii) The previous planning application for Pembroke House, Frimley Road had been the subject of a large petition and had been refused. However, this had been in relation to a large supermarket occupying the ground floor and issues around a lack of amenity space. No complaints had been received in respect of the affordable housing. A new planning application would be submitted and considered in due course.
- (iii) Proposals to improve the public spaces across the town centre starting with Princess Way and the High Street were based on the Public Realm Strategy. The Council had recently submitted applications to the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership to improve the public realm for both areas, including measures to resurface the public footway and seating areas in Princess Way and resurfacing the High Street and pavement to make them more pedestrian friendly. The Camberley Town Centre Working Group was working with businesses to deliver projects to improve the High Street.
- (iv) The Borough formed part of a functional economic area with Rushmoor and Hart and, in developing the respective Local Plans, each Council would ensure that there was enough strategic employment sites and would have strategic policies in their Local Plans to allow Growth. These policies were monitored through annual Authorities Monitoring Reports, this Council's report being monitored by the Executive. The Council's Economic Development Strategy also sets out measures used by the Council to work with both public and private partners to promote and assist with the delivery of economic growth.
- (v) Measures to encourage inward investment were set out in the Economic Development Strategy, which was aligned with the growth strategies of both Surrey County Council and the EM3 LEP.

Inward investment was encouraged in a number of ways, including 'Open for Business', which included working with small companies, business associations and key account management for the larger employers in the Borough.

A report on economic activity was submitted to the Executive annually and the main measure of success would be an increase in the total business rates collected and the Council Tax Base.

- (vi) The Council was working with the Yorktown and Watchmoor Business Association and had submitted an application to the EM3 LEP to develop a new bus route to link trains and buses with the Business Parks, which were currently not served by public transport. This would include transport and infrastructure improvements and was an example of a direct way in which the Council was working with businesses to deliver improvements. The Council was also working with SCC to achieve improvements to the A30 Meadows Gyratory.
- (vii) Encouraging new developments to strengthen the local economy would be achieved by allocating sites for development (residential, employment, retail) through the Local Plan, examples including potential developments such as Fair Oaks, Deepcut and One Public Estate initiatives.
- (viii) It was confirmed that 100% of the new housing in Pembroke House would be affordable. Subject to agreement with the Housing Association on the best mix, of the 25 Units proposed, 15 would be one-bedroom units.

The Executive Head of Transformation also undertook to provide, where possible, more specific detail on how each matter raised was being measured.

The Chairman noted that previous versions of the Annual Plan had carried significant detail and that this version was designed to be more user friendly for members of the public.

Resolved, that the report be noted.

34/PF Task and Finish Groups

Councillor Robin Perry reported on a meeting of a Task and Finish Group, held on 14 March 2017, which had sought to review the impact of recent Government benefit reforms on Surrey Heath Borough Council and local residents, with a view to making recommendations on possible changes that could help minimise any negative repercussions.

The Group was assisted by Maria Zealey, from the Surrey Welfare Rights Group and the Revenues and Benefits Manager, Robert Fox.

The main welfare changes identified were:

- (i) Benefit Cap – down to £20k pa from 7 November
- (ii) Universal Credit - being introduced in phases,

- (iii) Housing Benefits - capped at Local Housing Allowance rates,
- (iv) Personal Independence Payment - replaces Disability Living Allowance,
- (v) Employment and Support Allowance being phased out from April 2017,
- (vi) Youth Obligation – from April 2017, 18-21 year olds to lose automatic entitlement to Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit
- (vii) Child Tax Credit – from April 2017, entitlement to Child Tax Credit will be removed for third or subsequent children born after April 2017,
- (viii) Spare Room Subsidy (Bedroom Tax),
- (ix) social tenants with a household income of more than £31k will have to pay higher “market rate” rents.

Looking at the impact of benefit changes on Borough residents, the number impacted upon by the benefits cap and the introduction of Universal Credit was relatively small, but the impact on those individuals was likely to be high.

There had been an increase in homelessness and personal debt, exacerbated by the bureaucratic nature of the new schemes and, notably the need to have access to and basic skills in ICT.

Many debt management and Benefits Advice support services had been discontinued as part of general financial cutbacks.

The Task and Finish Group was planning to meet again before formulating recommendations to the Committee.

Resolved, that the update be noted.

35/PF Work Programme

The Committee considered a report enclosing a draft work programme for the municipal year 2017/18.

Members noted that the Council Leader and Chief Executive had been invited to the Committee’s July meeting to discuss the Performance report for 2016/17. Because the original meeting date, of 5 July 2017, clashed with the Local Government Association Conference, this meeting had been moved to 12 July 2017 to enable the guests to attend.

The Committee agreed the following Work Programme for Municipal Year 2017/18:

DATE	TOPIC	OFFICER
5 July 2017		
1	Performance 2016/17	Louise Livingston
2	Finance Report – End of Year 2016/17	Kelvin Menon
3	Presentation - Changes to Services for Older People in the Borough	Tim Pashen
4	Emergency Planning/Business Continuity	Tim Pashen

5	Waste Action Plan	Tim Pashen
6	Information Items report (Complaints/Ombudsman/ Equalities/Air Quality Management/RIPA/Corporate Risk)	Andrew Crawford to collate
7	Task and Finish Groups	Andrew Crawford
8	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford

13 September 2017

1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders – Business/Corporate	Daniel Harrison/ Richard Payne
2	Review of Reserves and Provisions	Kelvin Menon
3	Annual Report on Treasury Management	Kelvin Menon
4	Green Space Update	Daniel Harrison
5	Task and Finish Groups	Andrew Crawford
6	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford

6 December 2017

1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders – Finance/ Transformation	Kelvin Menon/Louise Livingston/ Karen Limmer
2	½ Year Treasury Management Report	Kelvin Menon
3	½ Year Finance Report	Kelvin Menon
4	Finance linked Reports	Kelvin Menon
5	Transformation linked Reports	Louise Livingston
6	Update on Investment Properties	Karen Limmer
7	Task and Finish Groups	Andrew Crawford
8	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford

21 March 2018

1	Scrutiny of Portfolio Holders – Regulatory/Community	Jenny Rickard/ Tim Pashen
2	Corporate Risk	Kelvin Menon
3	Corporate linked reports	Richard Payne
4	Regulatory linked reports	Jenny Rickard
5	Task and Finish Groups	Andrew Crawford
6	Committee Work Programme	Andrew Crawford

36/PF Exclusion of Press and Public

In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, 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 Act, as set out below:

Minute	Paragraph(s)
37/P	3
38/P	3

Note: Minute 37/P is a summary of matters considered in Part II of the agenda, the minute of which it is considered should remain confidential at the present time.

37/PF Minutes

The exempt minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7 December 2016, were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

38/PF Review of Exempt Items

The Committee reviewed the minutes which had been considered at the meeting following the exclusion of members of the press and public, as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information.

RESOLVED, that minute 37/PF and the associated agenda report remain exempt for the present time.

Chairman