

Minutes of a meeting of the **Executive** held at the **New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate** on **Thursday, 23 March 2023 at 7.30 pm.**

**Present:** Councillors M. A. Brunt (Leader); T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), T. Archer, R. H. Ashford, R. Biggs, E. Humphreys, V. H. Lewanski and K. Sachdeva

**Visiting Members present:** Councillors Blacker, Chandler, Essex, J. King, Walsh

**65 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bramhall and Councillor Neame.

Apologies were received from Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison who was represented by Vice-Chair, Councillor Walsh.

**66 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 26 January 2023 be approved.

**67 Declarations of interest**

Visiting Member, Councillor Blacker, declared an interest in Item 7 – Retender of Home Improvement Agency and Handy Person Services, as a structural engineering consultant for Millbrook Healthcare. The current contract of these services was provided by Millbrook Healthcare.

**68 Leisure and Culture strategy**

Executive member for Leisure and Culture, Councillor Sachdeva, introduced the Council's proposed new Leisure & Culture Strategy. This set out the Council's overarching vision for leisure and culture in the borough, defining the Council's role and articulating the benefits that these services bring to residents and communities.

There were four core objectives to the strategy:

- To inspire residents to lead healthy and active lives
- To provide sustainable and accessible services
- To work in partnership with other organisations to provide services and support the local leisure and cultural sector
- To ensure our services are delivered in a financially sustainable way.



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The strategy had been discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee the week previously at its meeting on 16 March. The Committee had recommended that:

- The strategy be reviewed further and developed to identify the current leisure and culture offer to residents and what it aims to provide.
- The strategy set out how the objectives will be achieved; and
- How any weaknesses and challenges in the current leisure and culture offer will be overcome.

Councillor Sachdeva said that work on more detailed delivery plans was already in progress. The strategy set the overall direction in this service area. However, following recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the proposal before Executive was to prepare a more formal Part 2 of the strategy to provide more detail about strategy delivery and implementation. This would include input from other service areas. It would be developed in consultation with relevant Executive and O&S Members. Amendments to the recommendations to Executive and proposed amendments to the report had been published as an Addendum to the agenda pack.

Leader, Councillor Brunt, noted that this was a high-level strategy and there had been agreement about the overall direction. The strategy was not designed to set out operational or financial information but instead be used to guide the development of detailed implementation plans to deliver on the objectives set out in the strategy.

He noted that in the past, leisure and cultural activities had been focused on the three leisure centres in the borough and the Harlequin theatre and cinema in Redhill. However this is only a small part of borough's leisure and culture activities that included numerous parks and greenspaces in the borough as well as allotments, activities at three community centres and children's sports holiday activities. The new Leisure & Culture Strategy set out a broader scope to support and encourage partnership working and community groups such as the Archway theatre company in Horley, the Chipstead Players Theatre Group and other local arts events. There were also sports and other facilities across the borough including those not in the control of the council such as in the private and not-for-profit sector.

Executive Members asked questions and made comments on the following areas:

- A firm timeline for completion of Part 2 of the strategy to avoid a long implementation period.
- If outside leisure and sports bodies could be included in the consultation as well as internal resources.
- How the objectives set out in the strategy would be achieved.

The Leader said it was important to set and agree the objectives to go forward following which the implementation plan could be developed.

Managing Director, Mari Roberts-Wood, took an action to go back to officers to confirm timescales at the beginning of the next municipal year in June to appear back to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Executive before the end of the year.

Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Walsh, reiterated the feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee which included consultation with the Committee, a set timeline and a part 2 detailed plan to ensure residents get the benefit

of a wider look at leisure and culture. The Committee had asked for information on capital spend and requested measurable objectives.

Visiting Members asked questions on the following areas:

- Information about fees charged to organisations running events in the borough's park.
- Environmental issues in relation to health and wellbeing linked to environmental concerns. Councillor Sachdeva noted that environmental sustainability considerations were addressed in the strategy (p37 in the published agenda pack).

Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, said the strategy had been a huge piece of work and gave a firm direction to services for residents. It was a living document, and the next exciting step was to agree the projects and tasks to deliver on this strategic plan.

**RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- Approves the Leisure & Culture Strategy Part 1, as amended by the published addendum;**
- Supports the ongoing development of Part 2 of the Leisure & Culture Strategy, and notes that this will be developed in consultation with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before being brought to a future Executive meeting for approval in no less than 6 months.**

## **69 CIL Strategic Infrastructure Programme 2023-2027**

Executive Member for Planning Policy and Place Delivery, Councillor Biggs, set out the report on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Strategic Infrastructure Programme (SIP) 2023-2027 to Executive. This is a charge collected from developers of new house building. Eighty per cent of the CIL funding is strategic under national legislation and must be spent on infrastructure to support development in the borough. Annex 1 set out the list of project bids received for funding. Annex 2 set out the screening and assessment criteria to ensure consistency and transparency, Annex 3 set out the Project Assessment Summary and Annex 4 set out the Council's priorities for spending the strategic CIL funding.

Infrastructure providers had been invited to bid for a total of up to £18.2m of strategic CIL funding to run during the five-year-period, 2023 to 2027. Seventy-five project bids were received. All bids had been assessed against statutory requirements and the screening and assessment criteria. Almost half of the successful 51 project bids were in Redhill and Horley – the main location for recent development. It was agreed that the Executive would receive an annual update report on progress in transferring CIL funding and the delivery of the SIP projects. No Members of the Council were involved in prioritisation of the projects which was carried out by officers using the transparent scoring assessment process.

Councillor Biggs thanked all the community organisations that had been involved and had bid for this funding. He also thanked officers, including the Principal Planning Development Officer and Head of Planning, for their hard work to bring these bids and successful projects to Executive for approval. The Leader, Councillor Brunt, also expressed thanks to local groups to apply for CIL funding and Members who had

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encouraged them to bid. He hoped that those groups not successful this time would continue to engage with the Council for future bids.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the report on the CIL assessment process at their meeting on 16 March 2023 and their observations were published as an Addendum (Draft O&S Minute 73).

Executive Members made the following observations and comments:

- **Assessment of business plans** discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee – it was confirmed that one of the assessment criteria used in assessing all CIL bids was for organisations to include an acceptable business case.

Visiting Members asked questions and made observations in the following points:

- **Scrutiny of the project bids** – Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members had requested wider scrutiny of the bids and their full assessments . Annex 1 is the summary of all bids but the detail of at least the successful bids was requested. Annex 2 the screening and assessment criteria had been reviewed by the Committee but not the full details of Annex 3 – the full project bid scoring. Members asked for the application forms that had been submitted as well as the full assessment scoring (which was summarised in Annex 3) to be shared with them so they could see the breakdown of scoring on the bids for transparency. It was agreed that project bids could be shared to help Members give guidance to organisations for future bids.
- **Qualitative commentary** – Members queried the commentary on the qualitative considerations which varied between bids and asked for further information. It was confirmed that there was more commentary on larger bids. Officers could provide further information to Members if required.
- **Earlswood Scout headquarters bid and Battlebridge recreation ground athletics track bid** on p95 of the report was discussed. The latter had received a high score but had not been successful. It was confirmed that these two project applications had not received funding this time, but as both bids had been “screened in” they, or a variation of them, could be considered again through the annual review of the SIP (paragraph 66 of the report). It was agreed that project submission forms could be shared with councillors.
- **Battlebridge recreation ground skate ramp** – As discussed at a previous meeting of the Executive, this had burnt down and replacement costs with a concrete ramp were high. SIP Funding is to be allocated for a new outdoor Multi-Use-Games Area (MUGA) at Battlebridge Club (p97 of the report). There was scope for a skate ramp in the future in an appropriate location but made of alternatives to wood for insurance purposes but this was not part of the current CIL funding. Its replacement is considered too costly for one Local CIL Area Panel to fund, but could be re-provided in Redhill or in Merstham. It was referenced in the RBBC Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Study and a solution for an appropriate location and a design of a new one was being discussed with Greenspaces .
- **Carbon neutral and environmental sustainability projects** – it was noted that a number of bids that had been put forward for projects to reduce energy and carbon emissions and to add solar panels to buildings had been accepted, which Members acknowledged and were pleased had been included in the SIP.

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- **Redhill Memorial Park upgrade to play area and outdoor gym equipment** – this was set to receive a maximum of £113,824 of CIL funding which was seen as important as there were increasing numbers of new flats in Redhill. It is requested that additional play equipment is provided using strategic CIL rather than local CIL.
- **Solar-powered 80 Big Belly bins** – Members questioned whether there could be separate recycling Big Belly bins to avoid recycling being compacted with general rubbish and then sent to landfill. It was confirmed that there were options for both recycling and non-recycling bins.
- **Surrey County Council bids** – good matching SCC bids and a large project to improve Redhill Library (with £500,000 funding) was noted. There had been some funding for improving the cycling infrastructure but match funding and proposal to implement further cycle lanes had been disappointing.
- **Three Arch Road and A23 junction** – this was subject to a Surrey County Council public consultation and a funding bid. Improvements to walkers and cyclists in this area was discussed.
- **Communication with those bidding for funding** – Members asked about the communications plan for letting bidders know who had been successful or not successful this time. It was noted that only 1 bid made in Banstead, which was not successful. There are also several successful bids which include locations in Banstead. It was confirmed that all applicants had been informed about the Executive meeting and could view via the webcast. All those assessed would be emailed to let them know the outcome. Banstead Community Centre and Lady Neville Park had received funding. Even if unsuccessful at this stage, all bids assessed will stay on the list and can be reviewed annually.
- **Timing for funding released to successful applicants** – it was confirmed that funding would be released subject to conditions specific to projects' funding allocations. There is some flexibility between the years' funding allocations to bring projects forward subject to funding being available.
- **Transparency of scoring projects was welcomed** to help councillors explain why some projects are included and others are not. For example, benefits of the bid for drainage improvements to two rugby pitches compared to benefits of the bid for Woodhatch Road junction with A217 improvements. The latter was not successful due to the details of the bid and the current design option, which is at a relatively early stage which has not yet subject to initial public consultation, and which included highways proposal related to the proposed move of Priory School, which is not currently going ahead. Officers could provide the full assessment scoring. The Director of Place confirmed that she had met with SCC partners recently to discuss how to bring about improvements to this junction, which is a priority for both organisations. There remain funding opportunities from this SIP through annual reviews and potentially also from other sources.
- **Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust bids** – it was noted that feedback would be given by officers to the Trust as the quality and structure of their bids could be improved and there was a need for improved infrastructure projects in this area, for example, at local GP and dentist surgeries. Bids should be linked to health care strategies. The Leader would also raise this with the East Surrey Hospital Chief Executive.

### RESOLVED – that the Executive:

- (i) **Agrees the Council's second Community Infrastructure Levy Strategic Infrastructure Programme (CIL SIP) 2023-2027 with the amounts to be**

allocated in each relevant year including the national RICS CIL index (at Annex 4).

- (ii) **Agrees that the release of Community Infrastructure Levy funding to infrastructure providers for projects on the Community Infrastructure Levy Strategic Infrastructure Programme (CIL SIP) 2023-2027 (at Annex 4 or as amended by any subsequent annual review) be delegated to the relevant Head of Service for CIL in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder for CIL and Chief Finance Officer.**
- (iii) **Agrees to receive an annual review of the Community Infrastructure Levy Strategic Infrastructure Programme (CIL SIP) 2023-2027, noting the reported delivery progress of projects in the SIP and updating the SIP as appropriate.**

## 70 Local Authority Housing Fund

Members received a report on grant funding from the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund towards purchasing properties to be used to accommodate families arriving in the UK via the Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement programmes. The Council had been allocated £2.158m towards the purchase of 12 homes in the borough.

The Leader, Councillor Brunt introduced the report as Councillor Neame, Executive Member for Housing and Support, had sent her apologies.

The Executive were asked to:

- Purchase and refurbish up to four properties to be retained in the Council's ownership for use as temporary accommodation and let to households that meet the criteria set by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
- Approval to release up to £1.050m from the Housing Delivery Strategy Revenue Reserve as match funding for the four properties retained in the Council's ownership.
- Authorise a capital grant of up to £0.110m from the Housing Delivery Strategy Revenue Reserve to partner Registered Providers, Raven Housing Trust and Mount Green Housing Association to support delivery of 2 x 4 bed properties at an affordable rent level.

There was an additional £20k DLUHC grant on each property to allow for refurbishment and other associated on-costs. It was expected by DLUHC that the properties should be purchased and ready-to-let by November 2023. The Council intended to deliver the housing in partnership with the Registered Providers to resource the purchase and refurbishment of the properties and let some of the properties on assured tenancies others as temporary accommodation. The Council only had the capacity and expertise to manage temporary and emergency unsecure tenancies.

It was noted that paragraph 15 on p114 of the agenda pack should read that the 2 x 4 bedroom properties will be let on assured tenancies (rather than secure tenancies).

The Council-owned four properties would be temporary accommodation and let at social rents. In future the properties could be used for emergency accommodation and

would continue to be assets held and to be used for the borough. This was a great opportunity to bring more stock into a constrained system, including 4-bedroom properties – vital for housing larger families.

Visiting Members asked the following questions:

- **Housing Delivery Strategy Revenue Reserve** – It was proposed to release up to £1.050m from this reserve which covered up to 40% of the capital cost. Where was the shortfall and where is the remainder of funding coming from? Officers highlighted the table at paragraph 40 (p117 of the agenda pack) that showed the breakdown of funding. The balance to fund up to 8 properties purchased by partner Registered Providers would be provided by the Registered Providers. The 4 Council owned properties would remain in the ownership of the borough council and would save up to an estimated £63k a year in emergency accommodation costs.
- **House prices** – Members queried the £390,000 for a three-bedroom property. Officers confirmed that this was achievable mainly in Merstham and Horley on properties that needed refurbishment or were more difficult to sell in the marketplace and could be brought back into use.
- **Refurbishment costs** – it was confirmed that if under £20k was spent on refurbishing properties then this grant funding could be transferred to other properties.

**RESOLVED – that the Executive agreed:**

**The Chief Finance Officer be authorised to:**

**(i) Agree to and sign the Memorandum of Understanding with DLUHC in order to secure grant funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund and comply with the associated terms.**

**The Head of Housing be authorised in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Strategic Head of Legal & Governance, Executive Member for Housing & Support, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance & Governance, and Executive Member for Investment & Companies, to:**

**(ii) Use up to £0.600 million of Local Authority Housing Fund (grant funding), to purchase and refurbish up to 4 properties, to be retained in the Council's ownership, for use as temporary accommodation and let to households that meet the criteria set out by DLUHC;**

**(iii) Release up to £1.050 million from the Housing Delivery Strategy Revenue Reserve as match funding when purchasing the 4 properties that will be retained in the Council's ownership;**

**(iv) Authorise a capital grant of up to £0.110 million, from the Housing Delivery Strategy Revenue Reserve, to partner Registered Providers (RPs), Raven Housing Trust and Mount Green Housing Association, to support delivery of 2 x 4 bed properties at an affordable rent level;**

**(v) Obtain any necessary surveys, planning consents, quotes and tenders as required to carry out refurbishment work; and**

**(vi) Appoint and enter contracts as required, with legal advisors, consultants, suppliers and builders.**

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The Head of Housing be authorised in consultation with Chief Finance Officer, Strategic Head of Legal & Governance, Executive Member for Housing & Support, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance & Governance, and Executive Member for Investment & Companies, to:

(vii) Enter into Memoranda of Understanding with partner Registered Providers, Raven Housing Trust and Mount Green Housing Association, to enable them to participate in the proposed purchase and refurbishment of properties under this programme, and to ensure delivery compliance;

(viii) Provide capital grants, funded from the Local Authority Housing Fund, to Registered Providers to enable them to assist with the delivery of the required properties.

## 71 Retender of Home Improvement Agency and Handy Person Services

The Executive was asked to approve the procurement by re-tender of the Home Improvement Agency and Handy Person Services (HIA and HPS) contract and to approve the award of the contract by the Head of Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Strategic Head of Legal & Governance and Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the outcome of the procurement process. The current contract was due to expire in January 2024 at the end of the full five-year-term. The service had been outsourced for many years and was worth at least £0.600 million over five years. Since 2018, the services had been delivered by Millbrook Healthcare Limited on behalf of the Council as well as Mole Valley and Tandridge District Councils, operating under three separate contracts following a joint procurement.

The Leader, Councillor Brunt, said that the Disabled Facility Grant scheme, which is one of the core elements provided by the HIA contract, was funded by the government and enabled those in need of support to maintain their independence in their own home by providing adaptations to improve their quality of life, health and wellbeing. Services were primarily used to assist older or disabled people or people on low incomes with additional needs and support them to live at home independently for as long as possible. He encouraged Members to promote awareness of the service and make sure residents knew about the benefits of this scheme.

Executive Members noted that it was a positive scheme and enabled elderly and disabled people to be able to stay in own homes as a result of these services and continue to live independent lives.

The Home Improvement Agency and Handy Person Services had been outsourced for over ten years. Visiting Members asked about:

- Improving the **environmental sustainability** in the quality of building stock.
- How **feedback from residents** was taken on board
- Support for subsequent **ongoing or future maintenance** (such as for stairlifts) not just the installation.

Officers confirmed that the procurement exercise and retender would give the Council an opportunity to review the terms of reference and service specifications and learn any lessons from the last five years to improve services. This included making any changes to the environmental sustainability aspects in the contract within the limitations of the scheme. The scheme was governed by the Council's Housing



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Assistance Policy which was brought to Executive in 2022. This had included a change of policy so ongoing issues of maintenance were covered. This included a standard five-year warranty in the lifts grants package.

- Members asked how the **Housing Assistance Policy** was aligned with the two neighbouring borough councils. Officers confirmed that the three Councils aimed to be broadly consistent with each other and any differences were mainly budget driven.
- **Funding sources** – Members asked for a breakdown of the costs and funding sources. The majority of the contract was funded from an annual block fee, as well as from technical fees charged on completed Disabled Facilities Grants, funded from the grant allocation. It was expected that the new contract price would increase broadly in line with inflation. Further information could be provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) Approves the procurement by retender of Home Improvement Agency and Handy Person Services;**
- (ii) Approves the award of the contract by the Head of Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Strategic Head of Legal & Governance and Chief Finance Officer, in accordance with the outcome of the procurement process.**

## **72 Quarter 3 2022/23 performance report**

Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, introduced the performance report and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) up to the end of Quarter 3 (October to December 2022) (Annex 1).

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance also set out the Budget Monitoring forecasts (Annex 2 and 3) for the quarter and progress update on the Financial Sustainability Programme (Annex 4).

Councillor Lewanski told Executive that of the 10 KPIs reported on in Q3, eight were on target and two were off target. The two red-rated indicators were:

- KPI 3 – Staff turnover which was 18% which was higher than the target of 12%. This was due to a buoyant labour market following the low turnover of staff during the pandemic.
- KPI 10 – Recycling – a particularly dry summer had an impact on garden waste tonnage and collection levels were 53.9% against a target of 60%.

The report introduced KPIs planned for the 2023/24 financial year which were similar to the previous year. One new KPI was proposed on the number of accepted Stage 1 complaints received by the Council.

The Q3 performance 2022/23 reports were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on 16 March 2023. Their observations were published as draft minutes in an Addendum to the Executive's agenda pack.

Visiting Members asked questions on the following KPIs:

- **KPI 3 Staff turnover and any areas of persistent vacancies.** Managing Director, Mari Roberts-Wood, noted that it was a competitive recruitment market currently. However, there was not a concentration of vacancies in one job area. The Council was also targeting potential applicants through social media, including LinkedIn, as well as exploring different types of advertising. A recent senior job advertisement had attracted over 90 applications.
- **Cost of living crisis framework and tracking reports.** A briefing session for Members had taken place and the data and insight team were continuing to track external indicators. Uptake of frontline intervention services is also tracked to make sure the Council was providing services most needed by residents. Consideration will be given to how best these contextual data sources can be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- **KPI 10 Recycling percentages excluding garden waste** – it was confirmed by officers that this was provided in supporting information for the KPI. Councillor Lewanski highlighted that the Council was a high performer on recycling when measured against other local authorities.

O&S Vice-Chair Councillor Walsh commented on the positive reporting on KPI 6 (Net housing completions) and KPI 7 (Net affordable housing completions). He noted the response on KPI 3 on staff turnover which had been expected to rise and welcomed the action taken to increase staff retention.

Councillor Schofield, Executive Member for Finance and Governance, presented the Council's Revenue and Capital Budget position for Quarter 3 to the end of December. The projected full year outturn was forecast to be £18.532m against a management budget of £20.062m resulting in an underspend for the year of £1.530m (7.6%). Significant budget variances were set out in the report and chart on p167.

The full year Capital Programme forecast at the end of Q3 was £31.99m (55.6%) below the approved Programme for the year. The variance was a result of slippage in allocated investment for housing developments primarily due to related business cases that had not yet been fully developed.

Annex 3 to the report set out in-year Capital Programme approvals of £4.46m to reflect planned investment in housing and parking assets to be completed during 2023/24. These were fully funded through S106 funding and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This recommendation will be brought for approval to Full Council at its meeting on 30 March 2023.

Executive Members and Visiting Members made no further comments.

**RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- Note the Key Performance Indicator performance for Q3 2022/23 as detailed in the report and Annex 1;**
- Approve the Key Performance Indicators to be reported on in 2023/24 as detailed in Annex 1.1; and**
- Note the Budget Monitoring forecasts for Q3 2022/23 as detailed in the report and at Annexes 2 and 3 and the progress update on the Financial Sustainability Programme at Annex 4.**

**Recommend to Council to:**

- (iv) **Approve the recommended £4.46m increase in the Capital Programme for investment in housing and parking assets, funded from Section 106 and Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy resources, that were approved during the quarter.**

### **73 Risk management - Q3 2022/23**

Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, gave Members the Quarter 3 update on risk management 2022/23 (from October to December 2022). There were no new strategic risks in Q3. One strategic risk was recommended for closure – SR1 Coronavirus Pandemic as responding to COVID-19 was now part of business as usual for the Council.

At the end of Quarter 3 there was one red-rated operational risk. Additional detail on this was provided in a Part 2 exempt annex. There was no discussion on this item.

The report was considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 15 March 2023. The Committee sought clarification on the direction of travel for red-rated risks and requested further detail on measures to mitigate the risks. Further information on the Financial Sustainability programme had been provided.

Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor James King, confirmed that the further details and information requested had been received by the Audit Committee.

There were no further questions from Executive or Visiting Members.

#### **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) **Notes the Q3 2022/23 update on risk management provided by the report and associated annexes.**
- (ii) **Approves the closure of SR1 – ‘Coronavirus pandemic’.**

### **74 Strategic risks 2023/24**

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, set out the proposed Strategic Risks for the coming 2023/24 financial year as set out in the covering report and Annex 1. Strategic risks were those risks that have an impact on the medium to long term priorities of the Council as set out in the Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Strategic Risks had been reviewed in consultation with the risk owners and, where necessary, had received contextual updates to reflect the anticipated position on 1 April 2023.

The Audit Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 15 March 2023 and had made no formal observations or recommendations to the Executive.

There were no comments from Executive or Visiting Members.

#### **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) **Approves the strategic risks for 2023/24 as detailed in Annex 1 of the report to Executive.**

## 75 Risk Management Strategy - 2023/24- 2025/26

Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, introduced the Risk Management Strategy for 2023/24 to 2025/26 which was set out in Annex 1 of the report to Executive. The report recommended that the Executive endorse the strategy for approval at Full Council on 30 March 2023.

Councillor Lewanski told Members that the strategy, which is renewed every three years, set out the Council's approach to manage risk effectively. It explained how the Council identifies, assesses, manages and reports on the risks that it faces. The main changes proposed were:

- Inclusion of a corporate risk appetite statement to define the level of risk the Council was willing to accept and provide clarity and direction to risk management activities. The team had commissioned Zurich Resilience Solutions to assist with this work. Executive and Audit Committee Members had an input into this work. Zurich's opinion report was set out in Annex 2.
- Introduction of an assurance framework to document the principal risks faced by the Council and to map the corresponding controls – to be published annually.

Annex 3 set out a methodology document to provide greater detail about how the strategy will be implemented.

The proposed Risk Management Strategy and methodology was considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting in December. Councillor James King, Chairman of the Audit Committee told Executive Members that the work with Zurich and with officers had been very effective. Audit Committee Members had welcomed the opportunity to give their input and feedback on Zurich's work.

A Visiting Member asked if the quarterly monitoring of risk was sufficient.

Councillor Lewanski provided assurance that operational risks were reviewed regularly. Part of business as usual work was to monitor risks such as IT security on a day to day basis. Levels of risk can be raised if required.

### **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) Endorse the updated Risk Management Strategy (2023/24-2025/26)**
- (ii) Recommend that Council approve the updated Risk Management Strategy (2023/24-2025/2026).**

## 76 Debt Write Off 2022/23

Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, set out the Debt write off and recovery 2022/23 report and annexes. This recommended the write off of six irrecoverable debts totalling £203,770.73.

The circumstances surrounding each debt were set out in the report. Councillor Schofield reassured members that all possible recovery action had been taken in each of these cases and officers worked with a company or an individual in difficulty to

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conclude the matter satisfactorily. If this was not possible, the Council used its powers under law to recover debt until it became impossible, unlawful or uneconomic to do so. Write-off was only recommended when all possible avenues had been exhausted.

The Leader said the Council was sensitive to debt issues faced by residents and supported those facing financial issues before moving into debt recovery action.

### **RESOLVED – that the Executive approves:**

- (i) That six irrecoverable debts totalling £203,770.73 (Annex 1) be written out of the Council's accounts.**

## **77 Council chamber IT upgrade**

Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, introduced the Council Chamber IT upgrade report to the Committee. The report recommended to Full Council an increase of £0.150 million to the approved Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 to fund the upgrade of hybrid meeting and webcasting equipment in the New Council Chamber.

The Council had webcast its public Committee meetings since 2014 to increase accessibility, openness and provide opportunities for public engagement. The equipment was at the end of its lifetime and increasingly experiencing technical failures and overdue for replacement. The report and Annex 1 set out the business case for the project to ensure the local democratic process remained open and transparent for residents. Since 2021, the equipment had been used for hybrid meetings to make meetings accessible to those attending meetings remotely whether residents, Members or officers. This particularly helped those with families or caring responsibilities attend meetings virtually.

The upgrade also aimed to improve the user experience for operators so that the system was easier to set up and be more reliable as well as improve the audio and video quality. It would also provide an opportunity to consolidate support and maintenance contracts and identify potential savings.

The Leader said using the equipment had presented challenges during remote and hybrid meetings that took place during the pandemic. It was the right time to invest in updated equipment and software to provide ongoing transparency and support to those using the Reigate Town Hall Chamber.

There were no comments from Executive or Visiting Members.

### **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

**RECOMMEND to Full Council to agree an increase of £0.150 million to the approved Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28 to fund the upgrade of hybrid meeting and webcasting equipment in the New Council Chamber.**

## **78 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Work Programme 2023/24**

Executive Members received the proposed Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2023/24. Councillor Walsh, Vice-Chairman of the Overview and

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Scrutiny Committee, introduced the proposed work programme for the coming year. This set out the activity that was in line with the Council's priorities such as scrutinising performance and budget monitoring and receiving regular updates from Portfolio Holders and the new Leader. In addition to the Budget Scrutiny Panel, which was working well scrutinising the annual budget, three Members had been appointed to the Local Planning Advisory Group.

Councillor Walsh noted that the review of the work of Greenspaces team in regard to the countryside spaces in the borough and delivery of the Greenspaces work programme would be rolled forward to the coming year. This would be considered once the Greenspaces strategy had been reviewed and approved.

There had been consultation between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Managing Director before the Work Programme was agreed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 March 2023 for approval by Full Council on 30 March 2023. It was noted that the Committee acted as a critical friend to the Council and to Executive members.

Leader, Councillor Brunt, thanked the Committee and its Members for its work, in particular the work of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman throughout the year.

### **RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) To receive and note the Overview and Scrutiny Committee proposed Annual Work Programme 2023/24 and make any observations to Full Council for approval at its meeting on 30 March 2023.**

## **79 Appointment to the Board of Banstead Commons Conservators (2023)**

Members considered the nominations to the Board of the Banstead Commons Conservators who maintain and protect the integrity of the Banstead Commons, a strategic part of the green belt in Reigate and Banstead.

Councillor Harp had nominated himself for reappointment to the landowner representative position which was for a period of three years. This was agreed by the Executive.

The terms of two Conservators, Mr Nick Cull and Mr David Atkins concluded at the end of March. Banstead Commons Conservators had recommended that Mr Atkins be reappointed due to his wealth of knowledge on Banstead Commons and common land legislation and to ensure continuity on the board. This was agreed by Executive Members.

The nominations for the vacancies to be determined for the second appointment were set out in the report and in Annex 1 which was exempt and discussed in private session.

It was agreed that decision on the second appointment would be deferred while Banstead Commons Conservators were reconsulted to recommend to the Council the second appointment from applications received.

The Board and retiring representatives were thanked for their work to protect Banstead Commons.

**RESOLVED – that Executive:**

- (i) **Appoint Councillor Harp as a landowner representative to the Banstead Commons Conservators for the period April 2023 to March 2026 or until they no longer serve as a councillor.**
- (ii) **Elect Mr David Atkins as a conservator to the Board of Banstead Common Conservators for the period until March 2026 as recommended by the Banstead Commons Conservators.**
- (iii) **Defer the appointment of the second conservator to the Board of Banstead Commons Conservators and ask Banstead Commons Conservators to recommend to the Council the second appointment from applications received.**

**80 Statements**

The Leader, Councillor Mark Brunt, made a Statement at this last meeting of the Municipal Year. He thanked all the Executive Members for their hard work during the year.

He also thanked Councillor Archer and Councillor Bramhall who were leaving the Council, as retiring Members, for all their support to the Leader and their role on the Executive and wished them well for the future. In particular, he recognised the work of Councillor Bramhall who had served on the Executive for most of her 23 years as a Councillor.

This was also Councillor Brunt's last meeting as Leader of the Executive as he was leaving the Council in May. Councillor Brunt recorded his personal thanks to all Members of the Executive, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, other Members and to all the Council's officers, the clerk and Democratic Services team for their support to enable him to carry out all of the Executive functions.

He told the Committee: " I have been very honoured to have worked with you all. We have carried out a huge amount of work over the years to make a big difference to this borough and to residents."

**81 Any other urgent business**

There was no urgent business.

**82 Exempt business**

It was agreed that agenda item 15 – Appointment to the Board of the Banstead Commons Conservators – would be discussed in private session as they related to information relating to individuals.

Following this discussion, the Executive agreed the recommendations in public session (see Minute 79).

**RESOLVED** – that members of the Press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that:

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- (i) It involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act:
- (ii) It involves information relating to any individual; and
- (iii) The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The meeting finished at 10.04 pm