

Minutes of a meeting of the **Council** held at the **New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate** on **Thursday, 27 October 2022 at 7.30 pm.**

Present: Councillors F. Kelly (Mayor) and M. A. Brunt (Leader); R. Absalom (Deputy Mayor), T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), T. Archer, J. Baker, R. Biggs, M. S. Blacker, J. Booton, N. J. Bramhall, J. S. Bray, G. Buttironi, P. Chandler, V. Chester, M. Elbourne, J. C. S. Essex, P. Harp, N. D. Harrison, G. Hinton, J. Hudson, E. Humphreys, A. King, J. P. King, S. A. Kulka, V. H. Lewanski, N. C. Moses, C. M. Neame, S. Parnall, A. Proudfoot, R. Ritter, K. Sachdeva, S. Sinden, C. Stevens, M. Tary, R. S. Turner and S. T. Walsh

Attended remotely: Councillors Z. Cooper and S. McKenna

Visiting Members present:

32 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 22 September be approved as a correct record and signed.

33 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adamson, Ashford, Avery, Harper, Michalowski and Torra.

34 Declarations of interest

There were none.

35 Urgent business

There was no urgent business for Council to address.

36 Public questions

No questions were submitted by members of the public.

37 Questions by Members



Five questions with notice were received from Members of the Council with response provided in accordance with Procedure Rule 2.15.8.

	Question by	To be answered by	Subject
1.	Councillor Ritter	Councillor Brunt, Leader of the Council, on behalf of Councillor Ashford, the Executive Member for Community Partnerships	Charities and the cost-of-living crisis
2.	Councillor Essex	Councillor Neame, Executive Member for Housing & Support	Surrey County Council's county-wide strategy on housing, accommodation and homes
3.	Councillor McKenna	Councillor Neame, Executive Member for Housing & Support	Temporary mortgage support and evictions protection
4.	Councillor Chandler	Councillor Archer, Executive Member for Investment & Companies	Temperature control in Council buildings
5.	Councillor Sinden	Councillor Mrs Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	More and reduced cost allotments

Note: For more information on the response to Council questions, please see the following page on the Council's website:

<https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13260>

38 Local Plan - Local Development Scheme

Councillor Biggs, the Executive Member for Policy and Place Delivery introduced the Local Plan – Local Development Scheme and the recommendations to Council. It was noted that the existing Local Plan Core Strategy together with the Development Management Plan were scheduled to run until July 2027. It was therefore necessary to commence work on a new Local Plan setting out the vision and policies for development beyond 2027. This would fulfil the statutory requirement as well as allow development to be steered towards the most appropriate locations, to set ambitious environment sustainability requirements, help attract investment in infrastructure and respond to changes in legislation and demographics. The first stage in the development of a new Local Plan was to agree a Local Development Scheme, establishing a formal timetable to gather evidence through consultation with a range of stakeholders. It was proposed to return to a single plan rather than continuing with a disaggregated Core Strategy and Development Management Plan. This would be more efficient and effective as it would necessitate only a single consultation process.

It was emphasised that Members would be provided with opportunities to engage in the process of developing the new Local Plan.

Having received his request to talk to the item, the Mayor invited Cllr Harrison to speak. The Councillor expressed his concern about the possibility of not achieving the new Local Plan within the required five-year period such that the Council were to lose control of its planning policy. The evidence of what had happened to other Councils under such circumstances was cited with it being highlighted that Local Development Scheme lacked any contingency.

The Mayor invited other Members to speak but none were forthcoming.

In response, Councillor Biggs noted the need to work as a whole Council to make sure that the next Local Plan was achieved by the July 2027 deadline.

RESOLVED:

- i) To agree and publish the new Local Development Scheme and thereby commence work on a new Local Plan; and
- ii) To agree to consider the budget growth proposals, as part of service and financial planning for 2023/24, to establish a budget for preparation of a new Local Plan.

39 Recommendations

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Executive, from its meeting on 20 October 2022, (Minute 30/Treasury Management Strategy Outturn) be adopted.

40 Statements

Councillor Mrs Bramhall provided Council with a statement on the success of Greenspaces Team in the *South & South East in Bloom* competition. In summary the following awards were achieved:

- Gold: Earlswood Common, Redhill Memorial Park, Redstone Cemetery, Reigate Priory Park
- Silver Gilt: Reigate Castle Grounds, Reigate Garden of Remembrance, Reigate Heath, Tanyard Meadow
- Silver: Lady Neville Park

Councillor Neame provided Council with a statement on the decision agreed by the Executive at its meeting on 20 October 2022 to spend an additional £4m on emergency and temporary accommodation in the Borough. It was intended that this would be used to purchase one *House of Multiple Occupation* for single people and eight properties within the Borough to keep families local, within their social networks and children able to remain at their existing schools. Additionally, the Councillor informed Council that Wheatley Court had won an award for being the best large social housing development in the South East.

41 Motion: The cumulative impact of emergency sewerage discharges

Councillor Chandler proposed the motion making the following points:

- Concern expressed about the number of spills happening in the local area and that these may be exacerbated further local development.
- This was compared with Thames Water stating, as a consultee for new developments, that there was sufficient capacity within the Borough the Council's development plans. Had wanted to highlight this discrepancy to Council.
- Called on the need for proactive action to sort out why there were so many emergency spills and whether this would worsen as a result of further development.
- Called for the number of discharges to be monitored and to require Thames Water to respond to the Council on planning applications and the likely effect of spills.

Councillor Sinden seconded the motion and called on the Planning Team to use its expertise to ensure that any new development had sufficient sewage and drainage to be able to cope with the extra load.

The Mayor confirmed that it was convenient and conducive to the conduct of business to allow the motion to be addressed at the meeting.

Councillor Brunt, the Leader of the Council, responded to the motion on behalf of the Executive making the following points:

- Agreed that the number of emergency sewerage discharges was a concern.
- Had undertaken his own research to verify the number of spills and the effect these were having on the quality of rivers and streams.
- Highlighted difficulties with the data provided; the volume of the spills or what these contain was not included. Only the number and the time length of spills was provided.
- Noted that whilst the Council was obligated to protect the whole of the local community, it did not have the powers to regulate or impose penalties on those carrying out the discharges. Rather the responsibility was with the Environment Agency. Welcomed that the Environment Agency was imposing new requirements to reduce the impact of wastewater discharges but called on the Government to do more.
- As the Local Planning Authority, the Council had a role to assess applications in accordance with Development Management Plan Policies including that they do not have unacceptable pollution impacts.
- It was the role of the Environment Agency, as a statutory consultee, to independently assess the water quality impact of proposed developments. Therefore, it was not clear why the Council would employ its own consultants to do the same job.
- Development Management Plan Policies also made it clear that the focus for planning decisions should be whether the proposed development was an acceptable use of land rather than the control of processes and/or emissions which were subject to separate pollution control regimes. Planning decisions should be made assuming that those regimes were operating effectively.
- It was thought that there was little information that could be added by the Council paying for its own monitoring of spills.
- The Council was only in a position to request and not require that Thames Water consider discharge data in its response to any proposed development.

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The Mayor informed Councillor Brunt that he had exceeded the time allocated for him to speak in response to the motion but that as no other speakers had registered to speak, he was welcome to proceed with the time allocated for him to speak immediately before Councillor Chandler's final speech. Councillor Brunt continued and noted:

- Reports on major planning applications did already set out responses from Thames Water, the Environment Agency as well as local flood authorities along with how surface water drainage was managed.
- How planning applications were reported and assessed was a matter for the Planning Committee or the Development Management Advisory Group rather than Full Council but this matter had not been raised with the Committee.
- Therefore, whilst he agreed with residents and Members that there was more to be done by water companies to eliminate water spills, he was not able to support the motion. This was because the recommendations it contained would not achieve meaningful change or protection.

Councillor Chandler exercised his right to speak immediately before the vote on the motion. The Councillor was heartened that his concern for the quality of water and the protection of residents was shared. It was acknowledged why the specific recommendations in the motion were not supported and it was hoped that it would be possible to look for ways to ensure that water companies improve the infrastructure including not just for new developments but also existing and older properties.

The Mayor conducted the vote on the motion by show of hands. Fifteen votes were received in support of the motion with twenty-one votes against and five abstentions. The motion was therefore rejected.

42 Leader's announcements

Councillor Brunt, the Leader of the Council, had no announcements to make.

43 Mayor's announcements

In his announcements, the Mayor reminded Members that business attire was the dress code for all attending Council including remotely. The success of the Reigate and Banstead Volunteer Awards Ceremony was celebrated and the contribution of individual volunteers and teams to the life of the Borough highlighted. Members were reminded of arrangements for Remembrance Sunday and informed that the Town Hall building would be suitably illuminated as a mark of respect to all who had served and continued to serve. Details of the rescheduled event to unveil the Ark Royal ensign were provided (to take place at the Town Hall from 2:30pm on Saturday 19 November 2022).

Members were invited to attend the Mayor's Carols by Candlelight Service at Holy Trinity Church in Redhill on Sunday 17 December 2022. They were also encouraged to support the Mayor's fundraising activities including Burns Night on Saturday 28 January 2023, a luncheon event hosted by the Mayoress on Monday 24 April 2023 and a *Dress to Impress Ball* on Saturday 13 May 2023.

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The meeting finished at 8.37 pm