

## **BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD**

### **EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at the New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate on 14 September 2023.

Present: Councillors R. Biggs (Leader), V. H. Lewanski (Deputy Leader), R. H. Ashford, H. Avery, A. King, R. Michalowski, N. C. Moses and C. M. Neame

Also present: Councillors M. Blacker, J. Essex, S. Kulka, S. Walsh

#### **22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James King, Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources.

Councillor Nick Harrison, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee sent his apologies. The observations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were published as an Addendum to the Committee agenda papers.

#### **23. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting on 13 July 2023 were approved.

#### **24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **25. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY: ANNUAL REPORT**

The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability, Councillor Moses, introduced the third annual update report on progress in delivering the Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. Annex 1 in the agenda pack set out the Action Plan – a detailed summary of progress during the past year. Annex 2 set out a summary of external reviews such as building energy audits and reports on emissions and transport decarbonisation.

Councillor Moses said good progress had been made on over 100 actions included in the strategy action plan and continued partnership work with other organisations. The Council's emissions were down from the pre-pandemic levels although not unexpectedly, they had risen in 2022/23 as buildings reopened and activities locally increased as pandemic restrictions were lifted.

The covering report (paragraphs 26 to 31) set out specific projects underway, funding and carbon savings. The Council had allocated £239,000 of external UK Shared Prosperity Funding to sustainability activities and had secured over £850,000 of Strategic CIL funding to reduce energy use across the Council's buildings.

The report and annexes had been considered and discussed at length by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting the previous week (7 September 2023). This included points in the report on carbon savings, tree planting and supporting biodiversity, options on low carbon vehicles for the Council's vehicle fleet and helping residents to recycle more. The O&S draft minute was published as an Addendum to the Executive agenda pack.

Further information on the strategy and action plans for the coming year was set out in paragraphs 32 to 34 of the report which provided more information about key workstreams that are essential to become a more sustainable borough.

Visiting Members noted that:

- **Electric vehicle charging points** – electric vehicle installations being carried out by Surrey County Council's commercial provider were important to encourage residents to switch to using electric cars. Regular checks to ensure they were working was a vital part of a maintenance contract. Officers confirmed it was understood that part of the county council installation contract included maintenance. Work has been progressing on 6 additional charging points in Horley. Legal issues on ownership however were still holding up completion of 6 charge points in Banstead car park. Councillor Moses said that a written answer could be provided on the Banstead car park issues.
- **Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery progress** – phases 2 and 3 had delivered retrofit measures such as insulation on 63 of the most energy inefficient low-income households in the Borough. Officers confirmed that the focus was on the least energy efficient, leaky homes for residents on low incomes, but that support was also available for the 'able to pay' market via schemes such as Solar Together.

One Visiting Member commented that the strategy focused on council emissions. There was a wider scope beyond that as local councils working together can influence a third of all emissions on the bigger environmental challenges.

The Leader, Councillor Biggs, said that some elements of wider carbon emissions were out of the jurisdiction of district and borough councils but that Reigate and Banstead Borough Council with its dedicated team had made very good progress in the past year and was supporting both residents and businesses in the borough to take action. Members were happy to work with Surrey County Councillors to make an impact on the wider environmental issues that needed addressing. The detail set out in the Annex 1 and Annex 2 to the report demonstrated the ongoing work.

- **Gatwick Airport** – Members asked about increasing carbon emissions from Gatwick Airport which would be greater than whole of borough area. They noted the live development consent order application and associated consultation on proposals for expansion to the airport. The Leader said that he would be taking an active part in the Council's response, and this would be discussed with Members. Officers were currently working through more

than 30,000 pages of information that was now publicly available. The environmental impact on borough residents will be considered. The deadline for responses was 29 October 2023.

**RESOLVED – that the Executive:**

- (i) **Agrees the Environmental Sustainability Strategy progress report (Annex 1) for publication on the Council’s website**
- (ii) **Agrees that officers commence a light touch review of the current Environmental Sustainability Strategy to ensure it remains up to date.**

**26. LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND- ROUND 2**

The Executive Member for Housing and Support, Councillor Neame, introduced the report to Executive on the Local Authority Housing Fund – Round 2 - grant funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The Council had secured central Government funding of £824,800 through the second round of this grant funding to purchase and refurbish up to four properties in the borough. The Government scheme specifies that three of the four properties to be let as temporary accommodation to refugee families with housing needs who have arrived in the UK via recent Afghan humanitarian resettlement and relocation schemes. This grant funding was also an opportunity to increase the Council’s own small housing stock to acquire homes that can be let as temporary accommodation.

The grant would be topped up to £1.033 million from Section 106 reserves as match funding when purchasing the 4 properties, which will be retained in the Council’s ownership. The remaining property was permitted to be let under DLUHC grant funding requirements to a household owed a homelessness duty by the Council. There was also revenue grant funding of over £20,000 to help resettle each individual refugee over three years.

The Leader, Councillor Biggs, put on record his thanks for the work of Councillor Neame and the housing team to procure these properties which were a future asset for the borough. It saved money on costs incurred on temporary accommodation in bed and breakfast. There was also funding available from central Government to help towards the costs of looking after refugees.

There were no further observations from Executive Members.

Visiting Members welcomed the initiative and made the following observations:

- They noted the recommended lists of actions to assess a property’s viability for this programme such as surveys to be undertaken.
- **Contingency** – did the £35,000 forecast budget for refurbishment works contain a contingency fund in case there were increased or unknown building costs? It was confirmed that one property at a time would be purchased and then refurbished according to the budget available. This would contain any unexpected building costs during the project.

Head of Housing, Richard Robinson, said the round 1 refurbishment of homes had been delivered within budget. There had also been learning from round 1 of the funding scheme. There was more grant funding available for round 2. Councillor Neame said the enhanced budget for round 2 enabled the Council to investigate purchasing larger properties for families.

- **Ukrainian refugees** – Members asked about continuing support for Ukrainian refugees. Councillor Neame confirmed that properties purchased and refurbished in Round 1 (with Raven Housing Trust and Mount Green Housing Association) did support Ukrainian families. In round 2, the Government specified support for those Afghan refugee families who needed settled accommodation. Officers clarified that the Council has no bridging hotels for Afghan refugees in the borough. There were however Home Office-funded hotels in the borough which was temporary accommodation for housing asylum seekers.
- **Environmental sustainability and retrofitting homes** – it was confirmed officers are working with housing provider Raven Housing Association on a wider retrofitting programme of work for social housing in the borough. Future grants could be applied for, depending on capacity but the Council would do what is required within the budget allocated for this LA Housing Fund Round 2 project.

**RESOLVED – that the Executive agrees that:**

**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 Commercial & Community Assets, Executive Member for Finance, Governance & Organisation, and Executive Member for Housing & Support, to:**

- (ii) **Use up to £824,800 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 £1.033 million from Section 106 reserves as match funding when purchasing the 4 properties that will be retained in the Council's ownership;**
- (iv) **Obtain any necessary surveys, planning consents, quotes and tenders as required to carry out refurbishment work; and**
- (v) **Appoint and enter contracts as required, with legal advisors, consultants, suppliers and builders.**

## **27. QUARTER 1 2023/24 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Organisation, Councillor Lewanski, set out the Council's Quarter 1 2023/24 Performance Report and Annex 1 as the Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor James King had sent his apologies.

## Performance Management

Progress on 10 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were reported in Quarter 1 (April to June 2023). Seven were on target. The two red-rated indicators were:

- KPI 7 – Affordable Housing completions and KPI 10 – percentage of household waste recycled/composted. However while short of the quarterly target, the Borough Council has now delivered 1139 affordable units against an overall target of 1100 affordable units set out in the 15-year plan.
- KPI 10 – Recycling - against a target of 60%, the borough met 51.9% of household waste recycled/composted. This was in line with performance in previous years.

It was not possible to collect data and report on KPI 8 – Local Environmental Quality Surveys due to resourcing pressures in the cleansing team.

There were no questions from Executive Members.

The Leader, Councillor Biggs, noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had met the previous week (7 September 2023) and discussed the Q1 2023/24 performance report. Their observations were published as an Addendum to the Executive agenda.

Visiting Members made the following observations and comments on the KPIs:

- **Recycling** (KPI 10 Annex 1 p83 and p84) - Members queried household waste recycling (which was overall below target in Q1) and below target for the last two years, and about office paper waste that could be recycled in some businesses. The Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Avery, said the recycling performance was reviewed regularly with officers and the Council did all it could to increase recycling. Waste in offices was defined as trade waste and companies negotiated individually with suppliers to take this away. Director, Luci Mould, said as part of the financial sustainability projects, officers were looking at how services could be delivered differently in the trade waste area. Local authorities were waiting for updated Central Government guidance on proposed waste and recycling changes.
- **Homelessness prevention** (KPI 5 Annex 1 p79) – a Member asked about homeless families living in temporary emergency accommodation outside the borough with school age children at schools in the borough. Officers confirmed all effort was made to place families with children in the borough but due to a lack of suitable accommodation this was not always possible. Those families can request transport to school via Surrey County Council, who provide education services.

## Quarter 1 - 2023/24 Budget Monitoring

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Organisation, Councillor Lewanski, then presented the Council's Revenue and Capital Budget position for Q1, to 30 June 2023.

For the first time it also included the final Treasury Management Outturn Position for last year and the latest Quarter 1 update on treasury management activities to comply with the latest guidance on treasury management reporting.

In the revenue budget – at Q1 the projected full year outturn was £22.5m against a management budget of £23.19m resulting in an underspend for the year of £670k (2.9%). The full year Capital Programme forecast at the end of Q1 of £20.47m was

28% below the approved programme for the year. There was a forecast slippage of £8.14m largely because of an updated forecast of the time required to deliver the larger capital programmes.

Councillor Biggs highlighted the observations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 September 2023 which had been published as an Addendum to the agenda papers.

Visiting Members asked for further information about forecast investment income from property rents at Q1 2023/24 set out in the report. This was £3.419m compared to the £4.218m that was received in 2022/23 which represents 21.3% of the net revenue budget. Chief Finance Officer, Pat Main, said this would be followed up with a written answer.

### **2022/23 Treasury Outturn and Quarter 1 – 2023/24 Treasury Management Monitoring**

Councillor Lewanski, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Organisation, then set out in the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators and the Treasury Management Outturn 2022/23 performance reports and annexes. This followed the latest CIFPA accounting guidance on treasury management reporting. Annex 4 set out the outturn position for 2022/23 with all activities carried out within the limits specified in the Treasury Management Strategy for that year. Annex 5 set out the position for the current year to the end of June 2023.

The Executive noted that the Treasury Management Strategy showed that the Council maintained healthy investment balances. For cashflow management reasons, Councils have to ensure that they retain a minimum of £10m in liquid assets at all times. Members noted that there was short-term access to funds until the capital receipt for the sale of the apartments at The Rise (formerly Marketfield Way) had been received with a sale of £35.7m on 4 August 2023.

Visiting Members noted the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators and the Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2022/23. They asked for information on business rates that had been incurred on empty properties which would be a written response.

There were no further comments from Executive Members.

The Leader, Councillor Richard Biggs, thanked Members for their questions.

It was:

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

- (i) Notes the Key Performance Indicator performance for Q1 2023/24 as detailed in the report and Annex 1;**
- (ii) Notes the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme forecasts for Q1 2023/24 as detailed in the report and Annexes 2 and 3;**
- (iii) Notes the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators and Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2022/23 at Annex 4 and**

- the Quarter 1 Treasury Management Performance Update for 2023/24 at Annex 5; and**
- (iv) Recommends to Council to approve the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators and the Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2022/23 at Annex 4.**

## **28. RISK MANAGEMENT - Q1 2023/24**

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance, Governance and Organisation, Councillor Lewanski, introduced the Risk Management Quarter 1 2023/24 report on behalf of the Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor James King.

The new Risk Management Strategy had been adopted in March 2023. Following feedback from Members of the Audit Committee, a number of improvements had been introduced in the Strategic Risk Register as set out in Annex 1 to the report (p128 of the agenda pack).

In Quarter 1 (April to June 2023), no new Strategic Risks had been identified. There was one red-rated operational risk which was set out in an exempt annex. The Audit Committee had considered the report on 6 September 2023 and the draft minutes circulated to Committee Members.

Members asked about Strategic Risk SR3 – Challenging economic conditions for residents and businesses which was red-rated currently due to challenging economic conditions and the continuation of the Government's Household Support Fund which helped provide support for residents most affected by cost-of-living pressures.

Mari Roberts-Wood, Managing Director, said it was not known whether this central government fund would continue. She was happy to provide more information about the work of the Housing team and the Money Support team as part of ongoing response to the economic pressures faced by residents.

The meeting moved to Part 2 exempt business (Item 30) following a question from a Member on the Exempt Annex 2 – Q1 2023/24 red-rated operational risk item.

Following the exempt session, Executive Members,

**RESOLVED that the Executive:**

- (i) Notes the Q1 2023/24 update on risk management provided by the report.**

## **29. STATEMENTS**

There were no Statements given at the meeting.

## **30. EXEMPT BUSINESS**

**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: (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt

information as defined in paragraph 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act; and (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Following the exempt session after a Member question on Risk Management Q1 2023/24 (Minute 28), Executive Members,

**RESOLVED that the Executive:**

- (i) Notes the Q1 2023/24 update on risk management provided by the report.**

**31. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The Meeting closed at 8.31 pm