BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at the New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate on 10 October 2019 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors M. A. Brunt (Leader), R. H. Ashford, N. J. Bramhall, A. C. J. Horwood, E. Humphreys, G. J. Knight and V. H. Lewanski.

Also present: Councillors R. Absalom, M. S. Blacker, P. Harp, S. A. Kulka, S. McKenna, N. C. Moses and C. T. H. Whinney.

51. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive meeting held on 19 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Executive Members: Councillor T. Archer, Councillor R. Biggs and Councillor T. Schofield.

Non-Executive Members: Councillor N. Harrison and Councillor S. Sinden.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

54. SURREY HILLS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-25

The Leader of the Council invited the Head of Planning to introduce a report concerning the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural (AONB) Management Plan for the period 2020-2025.

The Executive was informed that the Surrey Hills AONB extended from Tandridge, through the Borough of Reigate and Banstead to Mole Valley, Guildford and Waverley. It was noted that the AONB included some outstanding landscapes and it was agreed that these should be enjoyed and protected.

The following points were noted:

- Each local authority with an AONB was required by law to produce and regularly review a Management Plan.
- Since 2008 the 5 Surrey Authorities had jointly agreed for the Management Plan for the area to be prepared by the Surrey Hills AONB Board.
- The Board was made up of representatives from each authority, the County Council and partner organisations such as the National Trust and Surrey Wildlife Trust.

During the discussion a wide range of matters were considered, including issues relating to: Reigate Heath, the provision of car parking and public transport; the adoption of the Reigate and Banstead Development Plan (2018-2027); resourcing responsibilities in relation to AONB improvements; and the importance of veteran trees.

In response to questions, it was explained that the Management Plan, set out in Annex 1 to the report presented, updated the previous plan from 2014 and took account of changes in circumstances, policies and national plans. It was highlighted that changes included greater recognition of the health and well-being benefits of the AONB; an increased focus on woodlands to cover veteran trees, hedgerows and biodiversity; additional guidance relating to development impacts within AONBs; and an increased emphasis on sustainable developments.

In conclusion, the Leader of the Council confirmed that the Management Plan had undergone thorough consultation and environmental appraisal to ensure it remained an effective tool in promoting the Surrey Hills AONB as an area to be enjoyed while taking care to ensure there were no adverse environmental impacts associated with this.

RESOLVED that:

(i) The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan for the period 2020-2025, set out in Annex 1 of the report presented, be adopted.
(ii) The Head of Planning Policy be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy, to make any necessary additional minor changes to the Management Plan before final publication.

Reason for decision: The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare and review – every five years – a Management Plan for any Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty within their boundaries.

Alternative options: To recommend changes to the Management Plan presented or to prepare and take forward a separate plan.

55. STATEMENTS

None.

56. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

57. EXEMPT BUSINESS

There was no exempt business to be considered under this agenda item.

The Meeting closed at 7.43 pm