

BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held as a Remote Meeting on 25 June 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors M. A. Brunt (Leader), T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), T. Archer, R. H. Ashford, R. Biggs, N. J. Bramhall, E. Humphreys, G. J. Knight and V. H. Lewanski.

Also present: Councillors M. S. Blacker, J. C. S. Essex, R. Michalowski, S. Sinden and R. S. Turner.

10. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 4 June 2020, be approved.

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Horwood.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

13. COVID-19: RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, introduced the report which set out how the Council, working with local communities, had responded with positivity and determination to the unprecedented and challenging times presented by the global pandemic. The Council would continue to play a central role in supporting the most vulnerable people in the Borough and whilst some activities had been paused or scaled back, many services and projects had continued, those included:

- The Marketfield Way development and the housing scheme at Pitwood Park
- New efficient vehicles including waste lorries, had been delivered
- Core statutory services had been maintained

The Council's recovery workstreams were underway, including the re-implementation of some of the services that had been paused. Those services included:

- Green waste collections
- Re-opening skate parks; and
- The phased re-opening of community centres and the Harlequin Theatre, at the appropriate time.

The Leader explained that there was an opportunity for the Council to learn from the past few months and to use that learning to do things better as a Council. This would involve a review of ways of working, alongside the provision of services to residents.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance, Councillor Schofield, set out the financial implications of the pandemic:

- Unbudgeted expenditure incurred through emergency response work was forecast to be £1.177m
- Reductions in service income due to changes in demand for services or policy decisions taken in response to the emergency was forecast to be £2.26m
- There were further potential financial implications arising from reductions in income from Council Tax and Business Rates.

The pandemic represented a material financial risk to the Council's budget. The current estimate of the net adverse financial impact for 2020/21 was at least £1m. The adverse impact could be funded through the Headroom Contingency sum included in the 2020/21 budget, however, other in-year budget risks would then draw on Council reserves.

Councillor Schofield emphasised that the Council was in a better financial position than many other local authorities and remained well-placed to respond to the challenge. A further report on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan would be made to the Executive in July.

The Executive welcomed the forthcoming Overview and Scrutiny task group review of the recovery workstreams. In response to questions from a Visiting Member, the Leader explained that the Council would continue to seek government funding for projects that supported the Council's environmental sustainability objectives.

The Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Bramhall, highlighted the progress made by Surrey County Council on cycling initiatives in the Borough; and set out that the Council's strategic approach to Environmental Sustainability would be considered at the next meeting of the Executive.

RESOLVED that the Executive:

1. Records its thanks for the outstanding efforts of all members and Council staff in responding to the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) emergency
2. Agrees the approach for recovering from the emergency, including the approach to service & financial planning and continuing to deliver on the Council's ambitions as set out in Reigate & Banstead 2025.
3. Agrees the latest forecasts of the financial implications of the emergency which will be updated in June to form the basis for in-year financial reporting and the Medium-Term Financial Plan review.

Reason for decision:

- i. To put on record the Executive's appreciation for the hard work and dedication of members and Council staff in supporting the borough and its residents through these unprecedented times
- ii. To formalise the Council's recovery plans and set the framework for the focus of service and business planning over the coming months.

- iii. To endorse current forecasts for the financial implications and the actions proposed to mitigate them.

Alternative Options: As set out in the report.

14. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT (Q4 2019/20)

The Executive Member for Corporate Governance and Direction, Councillor Lewanski, presented the report, on the Council's performance for Quarter 4 (January to March 2020). Of the 15 Key Performance Indicators reported during the quarter, 11 were on target or within the agreed tolerance. The Council's KPIs for 2020/21 had been updated to ensure that they continued to be robust and demonstrated performance against key corporate objectives. Eleven strategic risks were presented to the Executive for approval and subsequent reporting to, and monitoring by, the Audit Committee.

Councillor Schofield, Executive Member for Finance and Deputy Leader of the Council, reported on the Council's financial performance for Quarter 4. The Council had been impacted by several financial challenges in 2019/20 however, due to prudent financial management, overall financial performance had not been negatively impacted. Those challenges included the delay in reopening the Harlequin Cinema, DWP Housing Benefit Administration Grant reductions, service development pressures in the Finance Team and the emerging impacts of the global pandemic.

The provisional outturn for Service budgets was £0.47m (3.5%) higher than the approved budget; the overall provisional outturn including Central Items was £2.09m (11.9%) lower than budget. The net provisional outturn underspend of £2.09m, was recommended to be transferred to Earmarked Reserves initially to help address unfunded COVID-19 budget pressures with any unspent balance allocated to build up funds in anticipation of the next Pension Fund Revaluation in 2022.

Significant progress had been made on major capital projects which supported the delivery of the Council's objectives. The 2019/20 Capital programme provisional outturn was £18.96m compared to the approved Budget of £49.11m; the £30.15m variance was 61% below the approved programme for 2019/20. The variance comprised £29.74m slippage and an £0.41m underspend.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the report at its meeting and had welcomed the Council's approach to supporting rough sleepers and homelessness during the crisis. The Executive acknowledged the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and in response to questions from a Visiting Member, The Leader explained:

- That the Council would continue to address the causes of homelessness, working with partners, through its housing strategy
- That the Council's Recovery Plans demonstrated that the Council would continue to look to deliver services in a SMARTer way, which included working with the voluntary sector.

- That the recovery workstreams also provided for engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership, and partners in the Gatwick Diamond, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on employment at the airport.

RESOLVED

1. To note the performance and risk management update for the fourth quarter of 2019/20
2. That the provisional Revenue Budget outturn position for 2019/20 and the transfer of £2.086 million unspent resources to General Fund Reserves be approved
3. That the provisional Capital Programme outturn position for 2019/20 and the carry-forward of £29.491 million of approved Capital Programme resources to 2021/20 be approved
4. To approve the new KPIs to be reported on for 2020/21 as detailed in section 5 of the report
5. To approve the new strategic risks for 2020/21 as detailed in section 6 of the report.

Reason for decision:

To consider performance and risk management for 2019/20 and 2020/21, as well as to advise Members of the provisional Revenue and Capital expenditure for 2019/20.

Alternative options: None.

15. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The Executive Member for Planning Policy, Councillor Biggs, introduced the report. Following the adoption of the Development Management Plan (DMP) in September 2019, four of the Council's SPDs/ SPGs had been revised to reflect changes in national and local planning policy.

In response to a question from a Visiting Member, the Director of Place Services clarified that the Affordable Housing SPD provided a means to consider the cumulative impact of the sub-division of development sites.

RESOLVED

1. To adopt the revised Affordable Housing SPD, Barn and Farm Conversions SPD, Historic Parks and Gardens SPD and Reigate Town Centre Shop Front Design SPD
2. Revoke the current Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) (2014), the Appropriate Uses for Historic Barns Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (1994), the Historic Parks and Gardens SPG (2001) and the Reigate Shop Front Design Guide SPG (1999)

Reason for decision:

Following the adoption of the Development Management Plan (DMP) in September 2019, four of the Council's SPDs/ SPGs have been revised to reflect changes in national and local planning policy.

Alternative options:

- i) Do not approve the revised SPDs. This option is not recommended as legislation requires that SPDs/ SPGs must not conflict with the adopted development plan.
- ii) Do not agree to revoke the current SPDs/ SPGs. This option is not recommended as legislation requires that SPDs/ SPGs must not conflict with the adopted development plan.

16. APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD OF THE BANSTEAD COMMON CONSERVATORS (2020)

Councillor Bramhall presented the report, and the Executive considered each of the applications for appointment to the Board of Banstead Commons Conservators, whereupon it was:

RESOLVED That Mr D. Atkins and Councillor P. Harp be appointed to the Board of Banstead Commons Conservators.

Reason for decision: To ensure that positions on the Board of the Banstead Commons Conservators are suitably filled.

Alternative options: The Executive had the discretion to decide which nominees to appoint. Alternatively, the Executive may ask officers to seek new nominations.

Clerk's note: It was noted that the Wards of Nork and Tattenham Corner & Preston should have been included on the report.

17. STATEMENTS

There were none.

18. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

19. EXEMPT BUSINESS - TO CONSIDER THE EXEMPT APPENDIX TO AGENDA ITEM 7.

RESOLVED that the exempt information be noted during the consideration of agenda item 7.

The Meeting closed at 8.28 pm