

BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held at the New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate on 23 June 2022.

Present: Councillors M. A. Brunt (Leader), T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), T. Archer, R. H. Ashford, N. J. Bramhall, E. Humphreys, V. H. Lewanski, C. M. Neame, K. Sachdeva

Also present: Councillors J. Booton, P. Chandler, V. Chester, J. Essex, R. Ritter, S. Sinden, S. Walsh

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Biggs.

Councillor Sachdeva attended remotely so could not vote.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting on 24 March 2022 were approved.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. REIGATE & BANSTEAD 2025 ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Councillor Mark Brunt, Leader of the Council, introduced the Reigate & Banstead 2025 Annual Report 2021/22. This provided the second annual update on progress towards delivering the Council's Corporate Plan which sets out the objectives for delivering services to those living, working and spending time in the borough. It also highlighted how the Council had responded to the challenges of the pandemic. An update on progress on the corporate Equalities Objectives was also set out in a report to Executive Members.

Each of the nine Executive Members summarised highlights from their portfolio's area of work over the past year in the three areas of People, Place and Organisation. These were:

People Services

- **Community Partnerships** – Councillor Ashford highlighted the extensive work to support vulnerable residents, the transformation of the Borough's three community centres, and close working with health partners.

- **Housing and Support** – Councillor Neame highlighted the team's work supporting residents facing homelessness, the completion of new affordable housing such as Wheatley Court in Redhill and Camelia Close in Tadworth, and supporting refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.
- **Leisure and Culture** – Councillor Sachdeva set out the £100k Cultural Recovery Funding secured, partnership working with organisations across the Borough, return of events at the Harlequin, including the pantomime, and the work of the leisure team and developing Leisure and Culture strategy.

Place Services

- **Planning Policy and Place Delivery** – the Leader highlighted work in Councillor Biggs' portfolio area including the continued progress of regeneration of Redhill town centre, The Rise and the Light Cinema, the Place Delivery team's work on projects in Horley and at Merstham Recreation Ground. The work of the planning team on applications and responding to Gatwick runway proposals was summarised. The coming year will complete the Playing Pitch Strategy and consider the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- **Neighbourhood Services** – Councillor Bramhall summarised the challenging work of the teams delivering services through the pandemic such as refuse and recycling, parks and greenspaces (which received 9 In Bloom awards), street cleaning, parking enforcement and environmental health and licensing. There were record levels of domestic refuse collected during the pandemic but also high levels of recycling. Sales of materials, including paper and cardboard, and the high level of garden waste customers was delivering an income of £1.69m for the Council.
- **Economic Prosperity** – Councillor Humphreys highlighted the support to businesses to access government financial support in lockdowns with £800,000 awarded from Business Support Grants and Business Growth Grants. Successful partnership working with Tandridge District Council and the Department for Work and Pensions was helping young people find work through the Youth Employment Hub. Reigate & Banstead Works website was continuing to link local people to local jobs.

Organisation Services

- **Investment and Companies** – Councillor Archer highlighted the framework for the Council's investment activity set out in Part 2 of the Council's Commercial Strategy, the property portfolio which provides a net income of around £1.5m and the comprehensive review of the Council's assets with the Property Team.
- **Corporate Policy and Resources** – Councillor Lewanski summarised the new IT Strategy and investment, work of the Communications and Customer Contact teams to give residents the latest information and answer their questions, the HR team supporting staff with hybrid working and the quality data provided by the Data and Insight team to use in the pandemic response. The work of the Environmental Sustainability work was also highlighted supporting residents to reduce their energy bills as well as carbon emissions.
- **Finance and Governance** – Councillor Schofield highlighted the balanced budget agreed for the year ahead. The Council faced continued financial pressures and a new Financial Sustainability Programme of work was

underway. He paid testament to the work of the Revenue and Benefits team and colleagues in finance for successfully administering the high number of Covid-19 support grants from central government. The successful delivery of the local elections and return to face to face meetings in the Chamber, supported by the Democratic Services team, was also highlighted.

The reports were considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 16 June 2022. Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Walsh, commented on the positive year coming out of the pandemic and the progress of The Rise in Redhill and Camelia Close in Tadworth. He stressed the importance of a clear timetable for development of the new Local Plan up to 2027, with Member involvement in this, and the strategic review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Visiting Members made observations and commented on the following areas: the Leisure and Culture Strategy, the impact of financial equality going forward for residents who were facing higher fuel and heating costs, Gatwick Airport runway proposals and consultation, and reallocating allotments at New Pond Farm (the site of the proposed crematorium not now being taken forward).

A written response would be given about reallocation of allotments at New Pond Farm. The Council was working with other local authorities and supported by environmental health on the Gatwick Airport consultation response.

The Leader, Councillor Brunt, said the support on progress towards the Council's equality objectives served as a reminder of our duty to support all residents, including those with protected characteristics. There remained challenges ahead, but the report and the work of the past year had demonstrated that working together to tackle these challenges had put the Council on a strong foundation for the future.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- 1. Agreed the Reigate & Banstead 2025 Annual Report for 2021/22 for publication, and**
- 2. Agreed the Equality Objectives Progress Report for 2021/22 for publication.**

5. ENERGY SUPPLY CONTRACT

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance and Deputy Leader, Councillor Schofield, introduced the item to appoint a new provider of gas energy suppliers for Council properties from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2022. This was set out in a report to the Executive: Energy Supply Contract.

Councillor Schofield highlighted that:

- The Council's contract with previous gas energy supplier Avanti had ended on 31 March 2022 and tenders were obtained as part of the procurement exercise through the Council's appointed managing broker.
- This was a challenging contract renewal due to escalating fuel supply prices and an uncertain global market, exacerbated by the crisis in Ukraine.

- The new contract with Corona Energy for a period of 12 months from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 was higher than the historic budget with forecast additional costs of £119k.
- Actions to reduce energy consumption where possible would be taken and building energy audits were in progress to find ways to reduce fuel costs.

The item included a Part 2 report (exempt) which provided more information on the tender process.

Visiting Members asked questions about the environmental sustainability implications set out in the report on carbon offsetting arrangements that were in place with the previous gas energy supplier. It was confirmed that these remained in place for the duration of the new contract. Further written information would be provided to Members. A question was also asked about reducing reliance on gas boilers. Information on this was in the Environmental Sustainability update reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- 1. Agreed the appointment of Corona Energy as the provider of gas energy supplies for Council properties from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.**

6. RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MOTION: ROLL-OUT OF RECYCLING

Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Bramhall, introduced the report which was a response to the Council Motion: Roll-out of Recycling. At its meeting on 29 July 2021, Council resolved to refer this motion relating to progress on the Council's full household recycling scheme to flats and communal properties in the borough.

Councillor Bramhall highlighted that:

- Positive progress had been made since 2018 in rolling out full kerbside recycling services to flats and properties with communal bin stores.
- More than 90% of properties in the borough now have access to full kerbside recycling service. Importance of continuing to offer recycling services to flats wherever practical.
- Officers continue to work with landowners, landlords and occupiers to enable the introduction of new services to flats.
- The Council will continue to work with Surrey Environment Partnership to increase recycling rates and reduce the amount of residual waste.
- In Quarter 2 (July to September) of the financial year 2021/22, the highest ever quarterly recycling rate of 58.3% was achieved.
- The report set out practical and financial considerations which meant that pursuing other elements of the motion were not recommended.

Visiting Member, Councillor Essex, who moved the original Council motion, told the Executive that progress on the roll-out to flats had slowed which was disappointing; 6000 flats did not have full kerbside recycling services and at the current rate it

could take many years to roll-out. Those who lived in private rented accommodation (with communal bin stores) and relied on improvements from landlords were sometimes at a disadvantage.

Following a discussion on equality implications for residents without kerbside recycling, Visiting Members were asked to put in writing a request for the equalities impact screening assessment which was referred to in the report (paragraph 36).

Councillor Bramhall responded that a number of flats did not have space to provide additional bin stores for residents or to make necessary adaptations. 'Bring sites' for residents to recycle locally had been provided for flats without full recycling services. The borough had more flats than any other borough or district in Surrey but offered a high performing service. The team continued to collect the huge increase in rubbish and recycling across the borough both during and post the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Leader noted that the waste and recycling team was in ongoing discussions with management companies and landlords who were willing to adapt properties to take kerbside recycling. He drew attention to the recommendations set out in the report. The Council was willing and committed to continuing to work to provide the recycling service to as many flats as possible. Members could also ask for the list of properties in their wards who do not have the recycling service so they could have constructive conversations with their residents.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- 1. Noted the positive progress that has been made in relation to rolling out the full recycling service to flats such that in excess of 90% of properties in the borough have access to the service.**
- 2. Agreed the importance of continuing the rollout of a full kerbside recycling service to flats and properties with communal bin stores to maximise the amount of good quality recycling collected and to reduce the amount of waste sent for disposal.**
- 3. Noted the motion as presented to Full Council on 29 July 2021, and in response:**
 - (a) Agreed that the Waste & Recycling Team continues to work with landowners, landlords and occupiers to enable the introduction of full kerbside services wherever possible; and**
 - (b) Agreed to continue to work with Surrey Environment Partnership to deliver both local and countryside waste and recycling objectives**
 - (c) Rejects other elements of the motion.**

7. RESPONSE TO COUNCIL MOTION: RETROFITTING INSULATION

Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, set out the response to a Council motion on proposals relating to retrofitting insulation into domestic properties. This was referred from Council on 7 April 2022 for consideration by the Executive.

Councillor Lewanski highlighted the following points also set out in a report to the Executive to recognise the work the council is doing and future plans:

- The Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy's Action Plan and Progress Report include objectives on energy efficiency and to support residents to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions in their homes. This includes domestic energy efficiency measures such as the insulation referred to in this motion.
- Installing energy efficient measures in homes can also include savings on energy bills, improved living conditions and create local jobs.
- Recent achievements include working with partners such as Raven Housing Trust and Accent Housing to secure £1.5m Government funding to retrofit homes and working with Surrey County Council to promote the Green Jump Surrey initiative to bring about 111 energy efficiency measure installations to the value of £840,000.
- As activities were already in place, a number of the motion proposals were not accepted as they duplicated work already happening or were not cost effective.
- Existing arrangements were working well but task groups would be kept under review as part of the ongoing annual reporting process.
- It was accepted that the Leader would write to Government requesting further policy and financial support to address the insulation and other domestic retrofit challenges and scale of change needed.

The Leader, Councillor Brunt, announced that government funding had been successfully awarded to Raven Housing Trust (the largest social housing provider in the borough), to enable them to retrofit their properties for the most vulnerable people in the community. The Council had supported Raven in their funding bid to government.

Councillor Booton, who moved the motion to Council in April, said he was pleased to see the progress that had been made so far. However, he asked for proposals in the motion that had not been accepted, to be kept under review. He noted that paragraph 19 of the report acknowledged that despite the wide range of ongoing activities, without further funding, the limited resources and powers available would not be sufficient to deliver against national carbon reduction targets locally.

The Leader said he was pleased to be able to support a good part of the motion. His letter to Government would set out funding and action needed to give powers to enable local authorities to bring about change. The borough worked closely with Surrey County Council and across political parties to achieve change needed.

Visiting Members set out their experience of working in this field. Delivering retrofit housing was a complex and costly process but the benefits to residents were immense. The Council needed to be ready to go once funding and more devolved powers were in place. Training people locally to provide retrofitting skills needed in the industry was vital and could provide high level employment in Reigate, Banstead and Horley. It was noted that East Surrey College could accredit skills in retrofit that were urgently needed in this growing sector.

Members also raised the issue of government support for much smaller social housing landlords, so they were able to access funding for retrofitting their properties in the borough. Paragraph 12 of the report noted that there was twice as much low quality insulation in the private rented housing and three times as much for owner occupiers. This showed the scale of the challenge required.

Councillor Lewanski noted the request for support for smaller housing associations to access funding. Executive Member for Housing and Support, Councillor Neame, said a list of smaller social housing associations who needed support to access funding could be provided. Raven Housing Trust would be asked to share their experiences of what they have achieved in the borough with other social landlords.

The Leader thanked Members for a positive discussion. He said that the Council was working closely with East Surrey College so they could secure funding for a sustainable construction college on their site and train would-be tradespeople to develop skills in sustainable construction and retrofit.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- 1) Noted the motion as presented to Full Council on 7 April 2022.**
- 2) Agreed the importance of retrofitting insulation to domestic properties in the borough, both because of the reductions in carbon emissions that this brings and its ability to improve living conditions and reduce energy bills for residents.**
- 3) Noted the work that is currently underway by officers in relation to domestic retrofit (including in relation to areas of activity covered in the Council motion) and the progress that has been made to date, but also the scale of the challenge associated with domestic retrofit, and the need for Government action to help enable activity to be scale up both nationally and locally to achieve carbon reduction targets.**
- 4) Agreed that the Leader of the Council write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and COP26 President requested government support to address the domestic retrofit challenges faced by local government generally and in Reigate & Banstead specifically.**
- 5) Requested that the Head of Corporate Policy keeps the need for a local retrofit task force and local training and delivery partnerships under review and that any additional actions required are proposed via the annual Environmental Sustainability Strategy progress report.**

8. QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22

Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, introduced the report into the Council's performance up to the end of Quarter 4 (January to March 2022).

Of the 11 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), ten were on target or within the agreed tolerance. There was one red-rated indicator – (KPI 10 Recycling) – against a challenging target of 60%, 54% was achieved in this quarter. However, the cumulative achievement for the year to date shows the Council's strongest ever performance on recycling.

Councillor Lewanski also highlighted that performance on Council Tax and Business Rates collection had improved following the pandemic with collection rates for Council Tax collection now at 99.14% and Business Rates at 99.1%. Performance against homelessness targets and housing delivery were both above target with 43 completions of affordable units in the borough.

The report was discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 June 2022 meeting and observations from the Committee published as an Addendum. Vice-Chair of O&S, Councillor Walsh, noted the good performance shown in the KPIs, especially the Council Tax Collection improved rates. The percentage of household waste that is recycled and composted was a stretch target for the Council.

Visiting Members commented on KPI 7 – Net affordable housing completions and noted the need for more affordable housing in the borough. It was confirmed that around £19m was set aside in the budget for affordable housing. Available land was needed, and it took many years to approve and build affordable homes. Details of an early feasibility stage project could be provided to Members.

It was also noted that some developers built piecemeal smaller developments, so they did not have to make a financial contribution on affordable housing which was frustrating.

Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, highlighted the financial performance in the provisional Revenue and Capital Programme Budget Outturn 2021/22. This included:

- The full-year outturn was £16.5m against a management budget of £17.4m resulting in an underspend of £900k.
- Central Budgets' outturn was £1.5m against a management budget of £1.1m resulting in an overspend of £400k, mainly as a result of pension costs paid to Surrey Pension Fund.
- The challenging impact of the pandemic were closely monitored throughout the year and every possible source of funding had been pursued. Income losses directly attributable to the pandemic totalled £1.4m and £400k of this was covered by the Sales, Fees & Charges Grant from Government.
- Overall there was a net overspend of £541k for the year which was funded by calling on the £2m COVID-19 Reserve created as part of the 2021/22 budget setting.
- The Council was starting from a position of relative strength moving into 2022/23 and was focusing on addressing medium term risks through our Financial Sustainability Plan.

The report was discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 June 2022 meeting and observations from the Committee published as an Addendum. Vice-Chair of O&S, Councillor Walsh, noted the net overspend and COVID-19 related losses (including drop in car parking income) which had been offset by good performance and an underspend on the management budget.

A Visiting Member asked if the payment to the Surrey Pension Fund was historic and if it was needed annually. Interim Head of Finance, Pat Main, confirmed that this was related to historic contributions and would follow-up with a written explanation.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. **Noted the Key Performance Indicator performance for Q4 2021/22 as detailed in the report and Annex 1.**

- 2. Noted the Revenue Budget outturn for 2021/22 as detailed in the report and at Annex 2 and approved the recommended budget carry-forwards to 2022/23.**
- 3. Noted the Capital Programme outturn for 2021/22 as detailed in the report and at Annex 3.**

9. RISK MANAGEMENT - Q4 2021/22

Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, updated the Committee on Quarter 4 risk management and strategic risk register (from January to March 2022). No new strategic risks had been identified. Two strategic risks were recommended for closure as set out in the report. These were:

- Strategic Risk (SR 6) – Reliance on the welfare system; and
- Strategic Risk (SR 9) – Marketfield Way (as good progress had been made on the site and in securing lettings).

At the end of Quarter 4, there was one red-rated operational risk. Additional detail on this was provided in the Part 2 exempt annex.

The Audit Committee considered the report at its meeting on 14 June 2022. The Committee had requested that the Executive consider maintaining two strategic risks for SR6 (Reliance on the welfare system) which focused on the impact on residents and the impact on businesses. As the current risk did not capture the current economic challenges facing residents, the recommendation remained that this risk was closed.

However, Councillor Lewanski moved a further recommendation to Executive, that as part of Quarter 1 reporting, officers consider the appropriateness of maintaining two separate strategic risks on challenging economic conditions, with an update brought to the Audit Committee and Executive in September.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- 1. Noted the Q4 2021 update on risk management provided by the report.**
- 2. Approved the closure of the following strategic risks in accordance with the reasoning set out in the report and in Annex 1:**
 - **SR6 – ‘Reliance on the welfare system’**
 - **SR9 – ‘Marketfield Way’**
- 3. Agreed that as part of Q1 reporting, officers consider the appropriateness of maintaining two separate strategic risks on challenging economic conditions, with an update brought to the Audit Committee and Executive in September.**

10. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2022/23

Members considered the Appointments to Outside Bodies 2022/23 report and Annex 1 to ensure that the Council was represented on a range of organisations and bodies working with the community and borough.

Group Leaders were provided with details of the vacancies and made nominations in May. Nominees for uncontested vacancies were appointed under delegated authority in May. Vacancies for the current municipal year were contested following the nominations process – Earlswood Common Management Steering Group and YMCA East Surrey Housing Advisory Group. These were determined by the Executive and set out in the resolution below.

The Council's representatives on outside bodies for 2022/23 would be updated on the Council's website.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- 1) Agreed to appoint representatives Councillors J. King, Kulka and Ritter to serve on the outside bodies listed within the schedule of nominations for contested vacancies set out in Annex 1 for Earlswood Common Management Steering Committee and to appoint Councillor Bray to the YMCA East Surrey Housing Advisory Group for Municipal Year 2022/23.**

11. STATEMENTS

There were none.

12. EXEMPT BUSINESS

The Part 2 Annexes on: Energy Supply Contract 2022/23 (Exempt Annex 1) and Risk Management – Quarter 4 2021/22 (Exempt Annex 2) were noted.

13. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

The Meeting closed at 9.21 pm