

Minutes of a meeting of the **Executive** held at the **New Council Chamber - Town Hall, Reigate** on **Thursday, 20 October 2022 at 7.30 pm.**

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

Attended remotely: Councillors K. Sachdeva

Visiting Members present: Councillors Chandler, Chester, Essex, Harrison and Ritter



22 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Biggs and Councillor Humphreys.

Councillor Sachdeva joined the meeting remotely and so was not able to vote.

23 Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting on 21 July 2022 were approved.

24 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interests.

25 The Purchase of Temporary & Emergency Accommodation

The Executive Member for Housing and Support, Councillor Neame, introduced the report setting out proposals to purchase temporary and emergency accommodation for homeless single people and homeless families in the borough.

There had been a substantial spend increase in securing emergency and temporary accommodation within the private sector which is expected to increase. This was compounded by the lack of void properties within the social housing sector since the pandemic, homeless applications from the Home Office overflow dispersal accommodation in Redhill and applicants from the Ukrainian household schemes.

The report requested £1m to be used to purchase and adapt a house of multiple occupancy to be used as emergency accommodation for 4 single homeless applicants on a rolling basis. This was equal to around 86% saving on costs for those applicants that utilise the accommodation. The report also asked for £3m to purchase around 8 family-sized temporary accommodation properties. This accommodation does not

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come under the Right-to-Buy scheme, so the properties will be retained as an asset on the Council's balance sheet.

Executive Members said the proposal was a good use of Council capital receipts received over the years. Over and above the financial saving, it enabled the Council to provide additional support and keep people closer to their network of friends and family in the borough. From experience of running accommodation for homeless families in Massetts Road, Horley, this saved money and improved the outcome for those families and single people.

Visiting Members welcomed the proposal. They asked whether the housing for families would be across the borough. It was confirmed that the most need was in the south of the borough which was where they would be looking for future accommodation.

In response to a question, the Head of Housing, confirmed that the end of Quarter 2 figures showed that there were 6 families housed in bed and breakfast accommodation outside the borough and 38 households in bed and breakfast in total. Larger households often ended up outside the borough as the Council struggled to secure larger emergency accommodation units locally.

Executive Members agreed the recommendations set out in the report as it was a high priority for the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- (i) Approve investing up to £4.000m from Housing Capital Receipt Reserves to:**
 - a) purchase and refurbish a property that will be designated as emergency accommodation for homeless single people; and**
 - b) purchase and refurbish additional properties for use as temporary accommodation for homeless families**
- (ii) The Head of Housing be authorised, in consultation with the:**
 - Chief Finance Officer**
 - Strategic Head of Legal & Governance**
 - Executive Member for Housing & Support**
 - Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance & Governance**
 - Executive Member for Investment & Companies**
 - a) To purchase a property that will be designated as emergency accommodation for homeless single people**
 - b) To purchase a number of properties within the agreed budget envelope that will be designated for use as temporary accommodation for homeless families**
 - c) To obtain any necessary surveys, planning consents, quotes and tenders as required to carry out refurbishment work**
 - d) To appoint and enter into any contracts as required, with consultants, suppliers and builders**
 - e) To apply to Homes England for any funding that could increase this budget envelope.**

26 Environmental Sustainability Strategy: Annual Report

The Executive Member for Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, introduced the Annual Environmental Sustainability Strategy Progress report – the second annual update.

The Borough's carbon emissions continued to decline and the Council's own carbon emissions – from our buildings and our fleet – were also falling. Work was underway to develop a programme of work to reduce the overall energy use and carbon emissions from its buildings. Fleet remained the largest source of the council's carbon emissions – 10 % of the fleet are electric or hybrid vehicles and emissions continue to fall. However, for much of the fleet, low carbon vehicles do not yet offer a viable or cost-effective alternative. In terms of infrastructure for charging electric vehicles, 400 new charging points last year were secured as part of new developments.

The Council had supported a number of residents in lower income hard-to-heat homes. Training on carbon literacy had been undertaken by 14 Councillors.

The annual report had been discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 October 2022. The Committee had asked questions and discussed topics such as tree planting and the use of weedkiller, retrofitting domestic properties, communications on energy saving and the electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

The Leader welcomed the report. He said that following Full Council, he had written to the Prime Minister and was waiting for a response on the support for local government funding on environmental sustainability issues.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison, thanked officers and Members for responding to the Committee's Advance Questions. He raised the issue of planting trees which were planted well away from residential areas so there was a need to make sure they were well-watered, particularly during the hot summer months. Councillor Lewanski confirmed that the trees were watered by the Greenspaces team for 2 years, but this summer had been challenging.

Visiting Members welcomed the report and the dedicated resource on the Council in this area now. Councillor Essex noted that 99% of carbon emissions were outside the control of the Council. These had dropped in 2020, however this was during the pandemic and residents were driving and flying again so the current statistics could be misleading. He welcomed the proposal to review the overall plan next year and asked how the Council could make substantial improvements to its buildings to improve carbon emissions and bring fuel costs down to be a leading example to residents.

Executive Member, Councillor Lewanski, said that the review will look at how the targets could be aligned and presented in next year's report. The Council was working with Surrey County Council and educating residents via its website and Borough news. The Council was reliant on government data which was available currently.

Cath Rose, Head of Corporate Policy, Projects and Performance said that there was a regular maintenance schedule for all council buildings and an energy audit is also being carried out. The outcomes of this report would be shared with Overview and Scrutiny as well as Executive when available. The audits are also considering use of solar PV on the Council's estate as well as other renewable energy generation.

Members agreed the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- (i) **Agrees the Environmental Sustainability Strategy Annual Progress report at Annex 1 for publication on the Council website.**

27 Local Plan - Local Development Scheme

The Leader, Councillor Mark Brunt, introduced the report on the Local Plan – Local Development Scheme, as Executive Member for Place Delivery & Planning Policy, Councillor Biggs, had sent his apologies. The current Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted in 2014 and was scheduled to run until July 2027 (subject to review in 2024). At that point it will become an out of date plan though some of the policies can continue to be used until they have been superseded by national policy changes. This report set out the approach to developing that Plan.

Since the Core Strategy was prepared, Redhill and Horley had seen noticeable change with new sustainable urban extensions and former brownfield sites redeveloped – providing nearly 4000 new homes. Key infrastructure funding had been secured to deliver new schools, cycle lanes, play spaces, outdoor gyms, bus stands and local funding to repair and modernise community facilities.

The Local Development Scheme was set out in Appendix 1 to the report including a timeline. A new Local Plan Communications Strategy was being developed to inform residents. The 2027 plan would take the Council through to the 2040s.

Executive members welcomed the report which was at the very start of the process and took a lot of work and time to complete. They noted that the plan helped to protect the environment and borough in future years.

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison, said the Committee had discussed the report at its meeting on 13 October 2022. They had asked whether it should be a two-stage plan rather than a one-stage plan. He urged the Executive to keep on top of the 5 year timescale and consider the risks of going forward with a single stage process.

Head of Planning, Andrew Benson, said that a single comprehensive plan was necessary to safeguard the Council's housing numbers and make sure the site allocations were not undermined.

The Leader noted that the Local Plan operated within a constantly changing environment. There was a greater risk to the Council if the process was split into two.

Executive Members noted that the Core Strategy in 2014 took 7 years to be adopted and the Development Management Plan (DMP) had taken 5 years to get to 2019. This was a significant and complicated project and needed close management to make sure the timeline did not slip.

Members asked when the Gypsy and Traveller Assessment would be made. Officers said formal evidence gathering had to wait so that evidence was not out of date and a

study could take a year to complete. The timetable set out in the report was intended to be realistic and meet key stages throughout that period.

Executive Members agreed the report and recommendation set out below with two recommendations to go forward to Full Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- i) Approve the allocation of funding from the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Reserve to fund 2022/23 expenditure.**

28 Quarter 1 2022/23 performance report

The Executive Member for Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, introduced the report which outlined the Council's performance up to the end of quarter 1 (April to June 2022). Of the 10 Key Performance Indicators reported on in quarter 1, nine were on target or within the agreed tolerance.

There was one Red-rated indicator which was KPI 10 – Recycling. Against a target of 60%, 52.4% was achieved. Despite not achieving the challenging target, the Council's cumulative 2021/22 performance of 55.6% was the highest ever recorded.

The report was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 October 2022 and the Committee made no formal observations or recommendations to the Executive. Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Harrison, said that O&S Members had discussed the cost of living and whether there was a way of measuring this.

The Leader said that while not a specific KPI then some measurements could be used to inform decision-making such as if there was a rise in the number of homeless people.

Visiting Members raised the issue of comparing the recycling KPI against the indicators in the pandemic.

Executive Members discussed the target on cost of living and the rapidly shifting national goalposts. Managing Director, Mari Roberts-Wood, said that the information on operational risk registers covered this area and was monitored monthly to support residents and work with partners. A report could supply the appropriate narrative.

Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, then introduced the second part of the report to Executive – Quarter 1 2022/23 Budget Monitoring. The Revenue Budget showed that the projected full year outturn was showing an underspend for the year of £504k (2.5%). The Capital Programme forecast was showing 45% below the approved programme for the year as a result of £30.18m slippage and a £0.05m net underspend. The reasons for this slippage was the substantial budgets previously allocated for investment in housing developments. Related business cases had not yet been developed but would follow in due course as strategies were implemented in these areas.

Visiting Member, Councillor Harrison, noted that the shortfall on rental income had improved and car parking income had also been favourable. New arrangements were in place to control headcount of staff.

Executive Members agreed the report and thanked the Chief Finance Officer, Pat Main, and her team for putting together the finance reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- (i) **Note the Key Performance Indicator performance for Q1 2022/23 as detailed in the report and Annex 1;**
- (ii) **Note the Budget Monitoring forecasts for Q1 2022/23 as detailed in the report and at Annexes 2 and 3;**
- (iii) **Note the update on the Financial Sustainability Programme (FSP) at Annex 4.**

29 Risk Management - Quarter 1 2022/23

The Executive Member for Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski, gave an update on risk management in quarter 1 2022/23 (from April to June 2022). As set out in the report to the Committee, in quarter 1, no new strategic risks were identified, and no strategic risks were recommended for closure.

There was one Red-fated operational risk which was set out in the Part 2 Exempt Annex. There was no discussion on this by Executive Members.

The report was considered by the Audit Committee on 7 September 2022. The Committee made no formal observations or recommendations to the Executive.

The Executive agreed one recommendation.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- (i) **Note the Q1 2022/23 update on risk management provided by the report.**

30 Treasury Management Strategy Outturn 2021/22

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance, Councillor Schofield, gave an overview of the report on an update on the performance of the Council's treasury management activities for the last financial year. The report formed part of formal reporting requirements under the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management. It confirmed that the Council had complied with legislative and regulatory requirements.

The report was considered by the Audit Committee in September for their comments and questions. Officers responded to their feedback including their observations on how the report content could be presented to provide more context which will be considered for future reports.

Executive Members supported the recommendations and agreed to submit the report to full Council for approval on 27 October 2022.

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

- (i) Note the Treasury Management Performance for 2021/22;**
- (ii) Recommend that Council approves the outturn against the 2021/22 Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators and the Annual Treasury Management Report (Annex 1).**

31 Partner and Shareholder Actions EXEMPT

The Partner and Shareholder Actions EXEMPT report was noted by Executive Members.

32 Statements

There were no Statements received at the meeting.

33 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 paragraph 5 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.**

34 Any other urgent business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting finished at 9.04 pm