

COUNCIL – 24th MAY 2018

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE, AND THE EXECUTIVE

Minute/ Page No.	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18
Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19 th April 2018 59/489	<p>The Committee considered the draft Annual Report of the Committee's work for the municipal year 2017/18.</p> <p>It noted that whilst there remained provision for joint scrutiny work in Surrey, there had been none undertaken as no agreement had been reached on a single county wide topic.</p>

**RECOMMENDED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
Annual Report 2017/18 be noted.**

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Employment Committee 26 th April 2018 11/491-493	<p>The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive, following the Council's decision in November 2017 to extend the appointment of Mr Gavin Handford as Interim Monitoring Officer until the end of the 2017/18 Municipal Year (to allow the Committee to review the position again during and at the end of that period as necessary).</p>

The Committee received a report on the work that Mr Handford had undertaken in his role as Interim Monitoring Officer since he was appointed into that position in April 2017 and an update on the extensive activities that he had undertaken, particularly in the period since the Committee last considered the matter in October 2017.

The Chief Executive paid tribute to the extremely difficult and testing activities that Mr Handford had managed during this period with an extensive range of complex matters that required his advice to ensure that the Council had been able to continue to deliver its priorities. The Committee noted that the forthcoming work programme for the Monitoring Officer included reporting to the Executive on a review of the Governance structure to reflect the requirements and changing needs of the Council's democratic fabric; a review of the Council's commercial governance activities as agreed by the Executive in March 2018 and supporting the Council to deliver the key objectives within its 5 Year Plan. The report before the Committee recommended the appointment of Mr Handford as the Council's Monitoring Officer on a permanent basis.

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Councillor Mrs. R. Renton, Chairman of the Committee, reported that the Monitoring Officer had made an informal presentation to Members of the Committee recently that demonstrated the work that had been achieved in settling the new Legal Services team into the organisation. It was noted to have been a helpful opportunity to review the work that Mr Handford had undertaken in his Monitoring Officer role since undertaking this Interim position in April 2017.

Councillor Mrs Renton also advised the Committee that Councillor White, who had excused himself from the meeting, had indicated that he was minded to support the appointment of Mr Handford into the position of Monitoring Officer for a further interim period whilst the Council considered other longer term recruitment options available. Councillor White also observed the importance of the Monitoring Officer role maintaining a neutral and consistent approach.

Members recognised the range of contributions that Mr Handford had continued to provide to the Council in his role as Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer. The volume of work that had been addressed in this period had been significant and the Chief Executive informed the Committee of the constraints on Mr Handford's capacity to undertake other development opportunities such as:

- a structured development review of the operation of the Monitoring Officer service from a member perspective;
- shadowing Monitoring Officers at other authorities; or
- undertaking additional specific training on the role (as discussed by the Chairman following the October 2017 meeting of the Committee).

Members considered that it would prove beneficial to the Council as a whole if a recruitment campaign was undertaken as soon as possible, to establish a wider range of options open to the Committee.

In the circumstances the Committee reviewed the Options presented in the report and considered that, to provide greater capacity within the organisation and to provide Members with more choice, that the Option to reappoint Mr Handford for a further interim period as Monitoring Officer be recommended whilst (in parallel) undertaking a recruitment campaign. The Committee noted that the recent experience of recruitment for positions in the legal services had been challenging as the competition with private sector packages available restricted the range and volume of interest.

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Members also noted the importance of establishing their key aspirations for the member aspects of the role going forward. This included the potential development opportunities for the Council by reviewing the person specification, key behaviours and job summary for the position of Monitoring Officer linked appropriately with the desired outcomes from the member aspects of the role. Members noted that there would be financial implications to be considered for the proposed recruitment of an external appointment to the role of Monitoring Officer and that these would need to be the subject of further consideration when that information was available.

It was therefore **RECOMMENDED** that:

(i) in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Mr Gavin Handford, be confirmed as the Council's interim Monitoring Officer (confirming his acting role) until such time as a successor was appointed and in post;

(ii) in parallel with recommendation (i) above the Council undertake a recruitment campaign for the position of permanent Monitoring Officer;

(iii) in preparation for the recruitment campaign referenced at recommendation (ii) above a review of the person specification, key behaviours and job summary for the role of permanent Monitoring Officer be considered by the Committee (informally) in advance of the recruitment campaign beginning; and

(iv) the Head of the Paid Service keep the Members of the Committee apprised of progress and, if it appeared that the conclusion of the recruitment campaign referenced at (ii) and (iii) above, to appoint a permanent successor to the role of Monitoring Officer, was likely to take longer than the next 6 months, then a further meeting of the Committee be convened to discuss next steps.

Reason for decision: To comply with the requirements of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 (as amended).

Alternative Options: To appoint another Officer of the Council.

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DEVELOPMENT OF UNIT 1, PITWOOD PARK, TADWORTH

Councillors Mrs N.J. Bramhall and Mrs R. Renton Executive Members for Property and Acquisitions and Housing and Infrastructure respectively introduced this report as this development was one that they had worked on together and crossed over into their respective portfolio responsibilities.

The Executive noted that the Council had owned the Freehold of the Pitwood Park site for a number of years and in 2016 obtained the long leasehold interest allowing the purchase of this former industrial site. The Executive had the vision to prepare this site for future residential development having dismissed the option to refurbish it for industrial use.

Councillor Mrs Bramhall explained to the Executive that the proposed development would introduce 25 new homes for local people of which one third would be sold at open market value and the remaining 18 homes as 'Starter Homes', a Government initiative which applied a large discount from full market value to the initial sale price.

The Government initiative required the property to be designated for residential use. By way of clarification the Executive Member explained that the Part 2 report on this initiative had been reissued in an Addendum to allow the Executive to be updated on the consistent application of the clawback provisions for all the residential premises sold at market value. The indicative clawback (overage) receipts had been updated to reflect that the Council would only seek a share in the uplift in value of the houses sold as starter homes that benefited from the substantial discount to market value.

Councillor Mrs Renton emphasised that the site had been identified as a priority to address the local housing affordability challenges, in addition to contributing to the revitalisation of the local area.

The homes proposed for this site would be a combination of flats and houses with eligibility to purchase these homes based on standard government criteria and a local connection qualification.

All the homes would be sold on a 75/25 shared-equity basis, with the Council retaining a 25% share in each property. Thus local people only needed to obtain a mortgage on 75% of the value of the property ensuring greater affordability options.

RECOMMENDED that the Head of Finance be authorised, in consultation with the Head of Property and Executive Members for Property and Acquisitions and Planning Policy, subject to key stage sign off as set out in the report presented to the Executive to include the costs of the project within the Capital Programme as detailed in the Exempt information Part 2 of the Executive's agenda.

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RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Head of Property be authorised, in consultation with the
- a) Head of Finance
 - b) Executive Member for Property and Acquisitions;
and
 - c) Executive Member for Finance

to make the necessary consultancy appointments to progress and submit a Planning Application for the development of Unit 1, Pitwood Park, in accordance with the budget set out in the Exempt information contained in Part 2 of the Executive's agenda;

- (ii) the Head of Property be authorised in consultation with the Executive Member for Property and Acquisitions to appoint the necessary Consultants for the redevelopment of Unit 1, Pitwood Park to prepare the necessary documentation and to obtain competitive construction tenders, subject to key stage sign off set out in the Executive's report;
- (iii) the Head of Property be authorised in consultation with the Executive Members for Property and Acquisitions and Finance to finalise, agree and sign construction contracts subject to key stage sign off set out in the Executive's report; and
- (iv) the Head of Property be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Property and Acquisitions, to agree the plot sales and subsequently enter into and complete individual sales for each of the residential dwellings, on the basis outlined within the Executive's report.

Reasons for decision: The Council's purpose of redeveloping this site was in part to help the Council to meet its 5 Year Plan aspirations to be financially self-sufficient but the primary objective being to provide homes that help address the local housing affordability challenge. The recommended option would deliver shared equity homes to local residents via starter homes and a further shared equity purchase option would provide a return on capital deployed.

Alternative options: To refurbish the existing property or dispose of it in its current condition.