

**Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on
27 November 2018**

PRESENT -

Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman); Councillor Clive Smitheram (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Tony Axelrod, Richard Baker, Alex Coley (For items 34 - 36 and 38 - 42) (as nominated substitute for Councillor Hannah Dalton), Colin Keane, Omer Kokou-Tchri, Jan Mason (as nominated substitute for Councillor Barry Nash), Vince Romagnuolo (as nominated substitute for Councillor Kate Chinn) and Clive Woodbridge

In Attendance: Ade O Oyerinde (Audit Manager) (Grant Thornton UK LLP)

Absent: Councillor Kate Chinn, Councillor Hannah Dalton and Councillor Barry Nash

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Damian Roberts (Chief Operating Officer), Lee Duffy (Chief Finance Officer), Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Rod Brown (Head of Housing and Community) (For items 34 - 38), Judith Doney (Head of Digital and Service Transformation), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Tony Foxwell (Senior Surveyor) (For items 34 - 40), Phil Gall (ICT Manager) and Fiona Cotter (Democratic Services Manager)

34 QUESTION TIME

Written Question

A member of the public had submitted the following written question regarding The Wells site, to which the following written responses were provided to the questioner following the meeting:

Q: *“The comments listed in you report do not seem to reflect what I have asked through your consultants or indeed what I have seen others post! Can you please confirm that email comments and forms posted direct were accepted or were only comments taken on the form at the exhibition included in your count?”*

Specifically I fear these points were not addressed or were only partially addressed.”

Reply:

All comments were accepted and assessed, whether they were received at the event or afterwards via email or post.

Comments were grouped together to identify consistent themes that needed further examination or to be addressed in the final development proposals.

Q: *“Does the design fit in with the existing properties? It has been stated that this development has been sympathetically designed to fit into the existing properties on the Wells! How can a 3/4 story block of flats with a virtually flat roof blend in with two story houses, chalet bungalows and maisonettes. It is totally out of character!”*

Reply:

The issue of design is addressed in the Design and Access Statement, which is attached at Annex 1 marked as Proposed Development Scheme.

The scheme design is in keeping with the Local Planning Authorities policies on character and design.

Q: *“Impartially of councillors who are also members of this team putting this development forward. Surely there is a ‘clear conflict’ of interest and they should stand down from the planning committee, take no further part in discussions in committee, while this item is discussed and voted on!”*

Reply:

The Council as landowner will (if approved at Committee) submit a planning application. As such, all members of the Council have an interest. The Council's codes of conduct will govern who may or may not be able to be a decision maker at planning committee, if and when, any application is made.

Q: *“Inadequacy of parking provision for the flats and community centre! 24 spaces for 23 flats two of which two are for disabled residents and none of the spaces are shown as allocated for community centre! There also hasn't been any provision for electric car charging. I believe SCCs guidelines recommends that there should be.”*

Reply:

As set out in para 7.2 of the report, following the recent engagement process, the scheme has been reconfigured to provide 2 additional parking spaces, bringing the total number of spaces to 26.

As set out in para 7.4 of the report, following recent comments from the engagement process, consideration is being given to the provision of electric charging points.

Q: *“What analysis has been done to ensure the security of supply of the utilities, that is: electric, gas and water to residents on the Wells. Are the sewer systems, surface and waste adequate for these additional properties on the Wells?”*

Reply:

Utility surveys are part of the standard development process and any development is subject to adequate provision.

Q: *“You have said that the roads are SCC responsibility in your report but if your development causes further deprivation to Wells Road and Spa Drive, what provision have you made in your budgets for the damage that will be caused by your development - usually new developments have to include provision for road improvements in their design phase?”*

Reply:

Surrey County Council as Highway Authority are a statutory consultee to any planning application. They are in that capacity, responsible for highlighting any highway improvements necessary for the development to go ahead.

Verbal Questions

Four members of the public asked questions at the meeting regarding The Wells site, to which verbal responses were given. In response to these questions, it was indicated that interested parties would have an opportunity to make representations on design and associated matters at the point at which a planning application was submitted. It was confirmed that 526 letters of invitation to the public consultation had been sent out by first class post. It was also confirmed that the financial model for the proposals was confidential at this time because of its commercial sensitivity.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made by councillors in respect of items on the Agenda:

Future Use of The Wells Site

Councillor Vince Romagnuolo, Other Interest: Councillor Romagnuolo declared his membership of the Planning Committee.

Future Use of The Wells Site

Councillor Jan Mason, Other Interest: Councillor Jan Mason declared her membership of the Planning Committee, took no part in the debate on the future of The Wells site and asked for this to be Minuted.

Future Use of The Wells Site

Councillor Clive Smitheram, Other Interest: Councillor Clive Smitheram declared his membership of the Planning Committee and that because he had been very closely involved in the process since 2015, he would not be taking part in the consideration of any future planning application in respect of The Wells as he considered it inappropriate to do so.

36 EXTERNAL AUDIT - ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER

The Committee received a report that presented the external auditor's Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31 March 2018 and the latest progress report. It was highlighted that, in accordance with Audit Regulations, both items had to be received by this Committee.

Mr. Ade Oyerinde, Senior Manager, Grant Thornton, was in attendance to present the Audit Letter and Progress Report and to answer any questions from Members of the Committee.

Mr Oyerinde highlighted that as a result of a new requirement on Grant Thornton to audit group accounts in 2017/18, the final fee for the main audit was likely to be £3,000 higher at £47,708. This was subject to approval by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd.

Mr. Oyerinde further reported that the certification work in relation to the 2017/18 Housing Benefit Grant had now been completed. The Council would be receiving an unqualified opinion and the fee for this work remained unchanged at £8,976.

In response to a query regarding the key value for money risk identified in relation to the establishment of EEPIC, it was confirmed that the auditors had not identified any issues at the present time in the current circumstances.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- (1) Received the Annual Audit Letter attached as Annex 1 to the report;
- (2) Received the External Audit Progress Report attached as Annex 2 to the report.

37 FUTURE USE OF THE WELLS SITE

Note: This item was moved up the Agenda running order with the consent of the meeting.

Note: In accordance with the Council's Rules of Procedure, Councillor Omer KoKou-Tchri wished his opposition to the decision to be recorded in the Minutes.

The Committee received and considered a report that updated the Committee on the outcome of the consultation with local residents (held on 18 October 2018) on the proposed site configuration and proposal for the development of the site.

The Committee approved the:

- (1) Proposed development scheme, attached at Annex 1 to the report;
- (2) Financial Business Case, attached at Annex 2 to the report (**Note: exempt from publication for reasons set out in the Agenda**)

- (3) Submission of a planning application for the proposed development scheme

and noted:

- (4) The setting up of a working group to consider the options for the internal design and operation of the community facility and play area

38 SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Committee received and considered a report that summarised the Council's safeguarding responsibilities and proposed a combined safeguarding policy for children and adults.

The report highlighted that the policy followed the safeguarding guidelines promoted and adopted by the statutory body for safeguarding, Surrey County Council. The policy updated current procedures to reflect best practice, clarified the reporting process and highlighted differing forms of abuse and indicators as well as summarising other related policies and strategies.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed the adoption of the Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults as set out in Annex 1 to the report.

39 MID-YEAR PLANNED MAINTENANCE REPORT

A report setting out progress on the 2018/19 planned maintenance programme and requesting approval for additional spend on new schemes was considered by the Committee.

Authorisation was sought for additional works in relation to:

- New water main, Horton Country Park (£26k)
- Works to the Town Hall internal lighting management system (£7k)
- Work resulting from legionella risk assessments (£20K)

It was also noted that the works to the heating system at the Community and Wellbeing Centre were being removed from this year's programme in anticipation that more extensive works might be required in the future.

The combined estimated cost of these additional works (£53K) could be partially funded by a projected underspend of £11.5K on the works programme previously approved with the shortfall (£41.5K) being funded from the property maintenance reserve. This would reduce the projected balance on the reserve to £307,320 as at 31 March 2019.

Accordingly, the Committee:

- (1) Noted progress on the 2018/19 planned maintenance programme as set out in Annex 2 to the report;

- (2) Authorised changes to the programme set out in section 3 of the report, including £41,500 additional expenditure to be funded from the property maintenance reserve.

40 POOLE ROAD PAVILION ENHANCEMENTS CAPITAL PROJECT

Following a tender exercise, a report was presented to Committee that sought additional funding to enable the capital scheme to replace plant in the boiler room at Poole Road Pavilion to proceed.

The report highlighted that reducing the scope of the scheme was an option, but not recommended. The report identified that the budget shortfall of £30,350 could be funded from seven S106 agreements, which provided funding within the Outdoor Sports Facilities category. The balance on this category of S106 funding stood at £172,300 as at the date of the report.

Accordingly, the Committee approved:

- (1) Additional budget of £30,350 to enable the scheme to proceed;
- (2) The use of £30,350 of S106 monies to fund the additional budget.

41 MODERNISATION OF THE EPSOM DATACENTRE

The Committee received and considered a report that sought approval of a capital budget for the modernisation of the Epsom datacentre. The scheme had been due to be considered as part of the 2019/20 Capital Programme but, due to extenuating circumstances and in order to ensure best value for the Council, the work needed to commence ahead of the capital budget setting timetable, due to be agreed in February 2019.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed to a capital budget of £220,000 for the Modernisation of Epsom Datacentre project, to be funded from capital receipts.

42 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 25 September 2018 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Strategy and Resources held on 24 October 2018 were agreed, and would be signed by the Chairman, subject to the determination by the Chief Legal Officer of a challenge by Councillor Omer KoKou-Tchri to their accuracy.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.37 pm

COUNCILLOR EBER KINGTON (CHAIRMAN)