

Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 14 November 2023

PRESENT -

Councillor Neil Dallen (Chair); Councillor Hannah Dalton (Vice-Chair); Councillors Chris Ames, Shanice Goldman, Alison Kelly, Robert Leach, Kim Spickett (as nominated substitute for Councillor Graham Jones) and Alan Williamson

In Attendance: Councillor Alex Coley and Councillor Steven McCormick

Absent: Councillor Graham Jones

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Andrew Bircher (Interim Director of Corporate Services), Brendan Bradley (Head of Finance), Piero Ionta (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Will Mace (Business Assurance Manager) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Manager)

20 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions or statements were received from members of the public.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in relation to items of business to be discussed at the meeting.

22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes and Restricted Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 21 September 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

23 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

The committee received a report presenting the annual review of the Risk Management Strategy. This review incorporated recommendations from the council's internal auditors (SIAP), and addressed points raised by council members and officers over the last year.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Responsibility for Strategy.** In response to a question from a councillor, the Business Assurance Manager informed the Committee that the Strategy was owned by the Strategy and Resources Committee, but the application of the Strategy would be reviewed by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee through its consideration of corporate performance reporting.
- b) **Alignment of risk appetite.** In response to a question from the Vice-Chair regarding the methodology and timing for ensuring that both Member and Corporate risk appetite were aligned, the Business Assurance Manager informed the Committee that feedback and recommendations from the workshop sessions would be used to inform the next annual review of the Strategy in September/November 2024.
- c) **Risk awareness.** In response to a question from the Vice-Chair regarding how risk awareness was embedded within the council, the Business Assurance Manager informed the Committee that there were a number of channels detailed within the Strategy. These included: Committee Risk Registers which were reviewed at each Policy Committee Chair's meeting, quarterly reviews of corporate risks undertaken by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee and provision within the council's project management toolkit. In addition, the council's Internal Auditor undertook periodic reviews of risk management arrangements, and the council's Local Code of Corporate Governance provided details of its risk management arrangements.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Approve the revisions to the Risk Management Strategy as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (2) **Agree to run a workshop with key councillors and officers to review: a) the council's risk appetite, and b) risk targets, and how these could be applied in practice.**

24 CONFERRING THE TITLE OF HONORARY ALDERMAN

The Committee received a report inviting it to consider conferring the title of Honorary Alderman on former Councillor Eber Kington, former Councillor Chris Frost, and the late former Councillor Clive Smitheram (awarded posthumously) in recognition of their eminent services to the Borough.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Honorary Aldermen standing for re-election.** In response to a question from a councillor, the Head of Legal informed the Committee that there was no legal bar on an Honorary Alderman standing for re-election, and that re-election for an Honorary Alderman would not affect the award of the title.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved with 6 votes for, 1 abstention and the Chair not voting:

- (1) **To recommend that the Council places on record its deep appreciation of the eminent services to the Council rendered by**
 - a. **former Councillor Eber Kington**
 - b. **former Councillor Chris Frost, and**
 - c. **the late former Councillor Clive Smitheram (awarded posthumously)**
- (2) **That a Special Meeting of the Council be convened immediately following Full Council on 12 December 2023, at which members will be recommended to confer the title of Honorary Alderman.**

25 STAFF PAY AWARD

The Committee received a report providing information and options to enable it to make a recommendation to Council for a staff pay award for 2024/25.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Rate of inflation.** Members of the Committee noted that the rate of inflation had been significantly above the percentage pay award agreed for staff in recent years and expressed support for the higher rates provided as options within the report.
- b) **Budgetary considerations.** Members of the Committee noted that a pay award of above 3% would have implications for the council's projected budget deficit.
- c) **Staff eligibility for pay progression.** In response to a question from a councillor, the Interim Director of Corporate Services informed the Committee that around four-fifths of council employees were eligible for pay progression. Pay progression would typically equate to an additional 2% increase in salary.
- d) **Staff benefits – travel.** In response to a question from a councillor, the Chief Executive informed the Committee that staff had access to a subsidised car parking scheme and season ticket loans.
- e) **Average staff salary.** In response to a question from a councillor, the Interim Director of Corporate Services informed the Committee that as at 30 November 2021 the mean average pay for employees other than the Chief Officers was £30,362.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Recommend to full council a 6% pay award for staff for 2024/25 as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report.**

26 URGENT DECISIONS

The Committee received a report informing it of the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with Appendix 2 to the Constitution – The Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.1 since the last meeting.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Communication of urgent decisions.** The Committee received a statement from a councillor in attendance at the meeting. The councillor informed the Committee that the first and third urgent decisions recorded in the report had not been reported in Member News, as required by Appendix 2, para 3.1 iii of the Constitution. The councillor requested the Chair to enquire as to the reason for this and report back to the next meeting on the steps that will be taken to make sure urgent decisions are recorded and communicated in the future. The councillor also requested that communication of urgent decisions be clearly marked as such in future. The Chair responded that he had already made the enquiry and that a response would be made to the next meeting of the Committee.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved:

- (1) To note the urgent decisions taken and the reasons for those decisions, since the last meeting of the Committee.**

27 RESOURCES

The Chair informed the Committee that no report had been published for this item, as the need for a report had been superseded by grant funding and the availability of internal funding.

Accordingly, the matter was not considered by the Committee and no vote was taken.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.01 pm

COUNCILLOR NEIL DALLEN (CHAIR)