

**Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 16 January 2024**

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**PRESENT -**

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair); Councillor Bernice Froud (Vice-Chair); Councillors Kate Chinn, Shanice Goldman, Alison Kelly, Rachel King and Kim Spickett (as nominated substitute for Councillor Darren Talbot)

Absent: Councillor Lucie McIntyre and Councillor Darren Talbot

Officers present: Rod Brown (Head of Housing and Community), Ian Dyer (Head of Operational Services), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Rachel Kundasamy (Community Development Manager) (Items 14-18 only), Serena Powis (Community Development Officer) (Items 14-17 only), Richard Appiah-Ampofo (Senior Accountant) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

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**14 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

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

**15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Voluntary Sector Funding 2024-25**

Councillor Alison Kelly, Other Interest: Councillor Kelly declared that she had a non-registerable interest in item 4 of the agenda (Voluntary Sector Funding 2024-25) due to being a volunteer for Age Concern and Citizens Advice, and stated that, having reviewed the LGA code of conduct and having received guidance from the Monitoring Officer, she wished to record the interest before the item was debated.

**16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 10 October 2023 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

**17 VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING 2024-25**

The Committee received a report considering the continued future support of voluntary organisations and setting out the proposed funding arrangements for 2024/25.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Central Surrey Voluntary Action.** In response to a question from a Member, the Community Development Officer explained to the Committee the work done by the organisation, 'Central Surrey Voluntary Action'.
- b) **Town Hall Tenants and Relocation.** In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Property and Regeneration explained that all of the Town Hall tenants, including the voluntary organisations, would be included by the Council in the Town Hall relocation process. He explained it would be down to the decision of the individual organisations as to whether they wish to join in the relocation.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **approve the proposed support for voluntary organisations in 2024/25 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.**

## 18 SUICIDE PREVENTION ACTION PLAN

The Committee received a report setting out the Council's proposed Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Revision of Action Plan Wording.** In response to a concern raised by a Member, the Community Development Manager confirmed that she would revise the wording at 5.4 of the action plan to remove reference to the word 'triage' in favour of alternative wording.
- b) **Support for Staff.** The Community Development Manager explained that support for Council staff would be provided through the relevant Line Management. Robust debriefings would be provided, along with any necessary consultations with Human Resources.
- c) **Training.** The Community Development Manager explained that trauma-informed training opportunities would be provided for staff in order to help staff to identify and respond to trauma and provide the appropriate support for residents. She explained that in-house training would be provided, as well as the opportunity for staff to attend mental health and suicide first aid courses. She stated that the opportunity to provide training for Members would also be investigated.
- d) **Identifying vulnerable Groups.** The Community Development Manager explained that the Alison Todd protocol, attached at appendix 2 to the report, includes an assessment tool that looks at how the Council responds to suicidality across seven key areas. She explained that the protocol would help to inform further suicide prevention action plans and help to inform a more focussed approach to suicide prevention with respect to groups identified as vulnerable.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **agree to adopt the Suicide Prevention Action Plan and associated programmes of work set out at Appendix 1 to the report.**

## 19 FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25

The Committee received a report recommending fees and charges for which the Committee is responsible, with the new charges being effective from 1 April 2024.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Ewell Court House.** Following a question from a Member, the Head of Property and Regeneration explained that the Council leases out Ewell Court House and receives a guaranteed base rent from the tenant.
- b) **Financial Support.** The Head of Operational Services explained that the Council is able to cover costs via the Disabled Facilities Grant for qualifying residents who are unable to pay for services such as the Community Alarm or Bathing services.
- c) **Competitiveness and Flexibility.** The Head of Operational Services explained that, whilst flexible and open to negotiation where appropriate, the Committee's fees and charges had been set in accordance with the market in order to be competitive and to cover costs for the Council.
- d) **Houses of Multiple Occupation Charges.** The Head of Housing and Community explained that, whilst the HMO charges had been set in line with the advice of the relevant Service Manager, it should be noted that those charges can only be set so as to cover the Council's expenses and not to make a profit.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved (6 for, 1 abstention) to:

- (1) **agree the fees and charges for the Community and Wellbeing Committee for 2024/25.**

## 20 REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25

The Committee received a report setting out estimates for income and expenditure on services in 2024/25.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Homelessness Action Plan.** Following a question from a Member, the Head of Housing and Community explained that the Homelessness Action Plan, agreed by the Committee in the previous year, was making good progress in its implementation.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved (5 for, 2 abstentions) to:

- (1) recommend the 2024/25 service estimates for approval at the budget meeting of Full Council in February 2024;**
- (2) support in principle the future savings as set out in section 5 of the report for inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.**

## 21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

The Committee received a report summarising the proposed 2024/25 capital programme and a provisional programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29, and seeking the Committee's approval for the programme to be submitted to Council in February 2024.

The Committee Considered the following matters:

- a) **External Funding.** Following a question from a Member, The Head of Property and Regeneration explained that due to the Council having a limited pot in the Capital Programme, there is a strong focus on securing external sources of funding, with a section of the Council dedicated to investigating and pursuing such opportunities.
- b) **Bourne Hall Maintenance:** The Head of Property and Regeneration explained that external sources were being investigated in order to secure funding for Bourne Hall, including a decarbonisation fund from the Government. He explained that in order to facilitate that funding, potential projects to improve the insulation of Bourne Hall were being investigated.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved (6 for, 1 abstention) to:

- (1) submit the capital programme for 2024/25 as identified in section 3 of the report to the Council for approval on 13 February 2024;**
- (2) note the provisional forecast of schemes for the capital programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29;**
- (3) note that schemes subject to external funding from Disabled Facilities Grants will only proceed once funding has been received.**

## 22 URGENT DECISIONS

The Committee received a report on 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.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) note the urgent decisions taken and the reason for those decisions.**

*The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.17 pm*

COUNCILLOR CLIVE WOODBRIDGE (CHAIR)