

**Minutes of the Meeting of the COUNCIL held at the Council Chamber, Epsom
Town Hall on 13 February 2024**

PRESENT -

Councillor Rob Geleit (Chair); Councillor Steve Bridger (Vice-Chair); Councillors Arthur Abdulin, Chris Ames, John Beckett, Kate Chinn, Christine Cleveland, Neil Dallen, Hannah Dalton, Liz Frost, Bernice Froud, Tony Froud, Shanice Goldman (Items 50-55 only), Christine Howells, Alison Kelly, Rachel King, James Lawrence, Robert Leach, Steven McCormick, Julie Morris, Phil Neale, Peter O'Donovan, Kieran Persand, Humphrey Reynolds, Kim Spickett, Chris Watson, Alan Williamson and Clive Woodbridge

Absent: Councillor Alex Coley, Councillor Julian Freeman, Councillor Graham Jones, Councillor Jan Mason, Councillor Lucie McIntyre, Councillor Bernie Muir and Councillor Darren Talbot

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Piero Ionta (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), Andrew Bircher (Interim Director of Corporate Services), Brendan Bradley (Head of Finance) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Manager)

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors regarding items on the agenda.

47 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting and Special Meeting of the Council held on 13 December 2023 were agreed as a true record and the Mayor was authorised to sign them.

48 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS/BUSINESS

It was with sadness that the Mayor informed the meeting that former Councillor Christine Long had recently passed away. Councillor Robert Leach paid tribute to former Councillor Long as a colleague, Ward Councillor and friend.

As a mark of respect, the Council stood in a minute's silence.

The Mayor made a number of announcements relating to noteworthy recent and upcoming events.

49 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Council received a report providing the Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRP's) review of the Council's Member Allowance Scheme and setting out the recommendations of the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Neil Dallen **MOVED** the recommendations in the report.

Upon being put, the recommendations were **CARRIED** as below:

The Council expressed its gratitude to the Independent Remuneration Panel and unanimously resolved that:

(1) The report and recommendations of the IRP are noted.

It was resolved with 21 votes for, 2 votes against, 3 abstentions and the Mayor not voting that:

(2) The Basic Allowance for Members of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council for the year 2024/2025 should be increased using a structured formula from the current Basic Allowance of £4031.70 to Basic Allowance Option B (£5,736.90) subject to any indexation.

It was resolved with 20 votes for, 5 votes against, 1 abstention and the Mayor not voting that:

(3) The SRA for the Chair of the Standards and Constitution Committee should be increased from 10% to 30% of the Basic Allowance from 1 April 2024.

It was resolved with 20 votes for, 5 votes against, 1 abstention and the Mayor not voting that:

(4) The SRA for the Vice Chair of the Standards and Constitution Committee should be increased from 5% to 15% of the Basic Allowance from 1 April 2024.

It was resolved with 20 votes for, 1 vote against, 5 abstentions and the Mayor not voting that:

(5) The SRA for Chair of Human Resources Panel should be withdrawn from the end of this municipal year.

It was resolved with 20 votes for, 2 votes against, 4 abstentions and the Mayor not voting that:

(6) The SRAs for 2024/25 to be in accordance with those listed in Appendix 1 of the IRP report.

It was resolved with 23 votes for, 3 votes against and the Mayor not voting that:

- (7) The Council's existing Dependants Carers Allowance continues without amendment.**

It was resolved with 24 votes for, 2 votes against and the Mayor not voting that:

- (8) The Annual Indexation of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances in line with the 'cost of living' percentage increase in staff salaries should be implemented from 1 April 2024 for the next two financial years.**

It was resolved with 24 votes for, 2 votes against and the Mayor not voting that:

- (9) To fund any increases to the Members Allowances Scheme that arise from the above recommendations, officers will need to be tasked with identifying compensating savings/additional income within services.**

It was resolved with 24 votes for, 2 votes against and the Mayor not voting that:

- (10) The Panel be instructed to review the Scheme on or before December 2025, as to the following specific issues:**

- (a) A full review of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) be undertaken, in particular the 'One SRA per Councillor' rule;**
- (b) Explore awarding a SRA for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and**
- (c) To review and propose a policy for pre-approved payments for travel, subsistence and attendance at conferences, seminars and other official Council business outside of the borough, having reviewed how this should work in future.**

50 2024/25 BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024-2028

The Council gave consideration to its 2024/25 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-2028, comprising both revenue and capital expenditure plans and Council Tax amounts for each band of dwelling. The report took account of the recommendations of the Community & Wellbeing, Environment, Licensing and Planning Policy and Strategy & Resources Committees (appertaining to fees and charges, the revenue budget and capital programme).

In moving the recommendations of the report, the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee, Councillor Neil Dallen, made a statement to the Council on the budget for 2024/25 to which Councillors Alison Kelly, Chris Ames and Kieran Persand responded.

Upon being put the motion to agree the recommendations of the report was **CARRIED**, there being 21 members in favour, 6 against and the Mayor not voting as detailed below.

Accordingly, it was resolved:

- (1) That it be noted that, under delegated powers, the Chief Finance Officer calculated the amount of the Council Tax Base as 33,762.43 (Band 'D' equivalent properties) for the year 2024/25, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act").
- (2) That the following estimates recommended by the policy committees be approved:-

 - a. *The revised revenue estimates for the year 2023/24 and the revenue estimates for 2024/25.*
 - b. *The capital programme for 2024/25 and the provisional programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29, as summarised in the capital strategy statement.*
- (3) That the fees and charges recommended by the policy committees be approved for 2024/25.
- (4) That the Council Tax Requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 is £7,636,049.
- (5) That the Council receives the budget risk assessment at Appendix 7 to the report and notes the conclusion of the Chief Finance Officer that these budget proposals are robust and sustainable as concluded in this report.
- (6) That the Council receives the Chief Finance Officer Statement on the Reserves as attached at Appendix 9 to the report.
- (7) That the Council agrees the Treasury Management Strategy and prudential indicators and authorised limits for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 12 to the report including:-

 - a. *Affordability prudential indicators;*
 - b. *The actual and estimated Capital Financing Requirement;*
 - c. *The estimated levels of borrowing and investment;*
 - d. *The authorised and operational limits for external debt;*
 - e. *The liability benchmark;*
 - f. *The treasury management prudential indicators.*
- (8) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

- a. *£57,798,035 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(2) of the Act.*
- b. *£50,161,986 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(3) of the Act.*
- c. *£7,636,049 being the amount by which the aggregate at 8(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 8(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year.*
- d. *£226.17 being the amount at 8(c) above divided by the amount at 1. above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31(B) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year.*

- (9) To note that Surrey County Council and Surrey Police Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below:-

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Band:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Amount	1,172.40	1,367.80	1,563.20	1,758.60	2,149.40	2,540.20	2,931.00	3,517.20

SURREY POLICE AUTHORITY

Band:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Amount	215.71	251.67	287.62	323.57	395.47	467.38	539.28	647.14

- (10) That the Council, in accordance with Section 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of council tax for 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings.

EPSOM AND EWELL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Band:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Amount	150.78	175.91	201.04	226.17	276.43	326.69	376.95	452.34

AGGREGATE OF COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENTS

Band:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Amount	1,538.89	1,795.38	2,051.86	2,308.34	2,821.30	3,334.27	3,847.23	4,616.68

- (11) That the Council agrees the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024-2028, including an updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- (12) That the Council agrees that a scheduled programme of discretionary service and asset reviews should be presented to Strategy & Resources Committee for approval and subsequent delivery.

51 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Council received a report presenting the draft Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 and seeking approval of the Statement following the recommendation from Strategy and Resources committee.

Councillor Neil Dallen **MOVED** the recommendation in the report.

Upon being put the recommendation was unanimously **CARRIED**.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

- (1) **Approve the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25.**

52 POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

The Council received a report setting out the recommendations from the Strategy and Resources Committee for proposed changes following the conclusion of the Polling Places and Districts review.

Councillor Neil Dallen **MOVED** the recommendation in the report.

Upon being put the recommendations were unanimously **CARRIED**.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

- (1) **Agree the location of the polling places and districts as set out in Appendix 1 to the report for a five-year period from 1st March 2024, or until it is superseded by any subsequent review of any polling place or district; and**
- (2) **Delegate to the Chief Executive in their capacity as the Council's Returning Officer any ongoing review or change of polling places during this period, to ensure that polling arrangements in the Borough remain fit for purpose for each election called.**

53 MOTIONS

The agenda for the meeting contained one motion ruled in order. The motion had been submitted by Councillor Kieran Persand.

Councillor Persand informed the Council that he wished to withdraw the motion and accordingly, the motion was not moved at the meeting.

54 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council passed a resolution by majority decision (with 24 votes for, 3 votes against and the Mayor not voting) to exclude the public from the meeting for Part Two of the Agenda on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended) and that pursuant to paragraph 10 of Part 2 of the said Schedule 12A the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

55 APPOINTMENT OF SECTION 151 OFFICER

The Council received a report requesting it to appoint Brendan Bradley as its Section 151 (s151) Officer on a permanent basis.

Councillor Neil Dallen **MOVED** and Councillor Hannah Dalton **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report.

Upon being put the recommendation was **CARRIED** with 26 votes for and 1 abstention.

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

- (1) Approve the appointment of Brendan Bradley as the Council's s151 Officer, on a permanent basis.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.30 pm

COUNCILLOR ROB GELEIT (CHAIR)