

Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 19 November 2025

PRESENT -

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair); Councillor Bernice Froud (Vice-Chair); Councillors Rob Geleit, Rachel King, Bernie Muir, Humphrey Reynolds and Kim Spickett

Absent: Councillor Graham Jones

Officers present: Linda Scott (Interim Assistant Head of Service - Venues), Susan Dalloe (Bourne Hall Museum Curator), Rod Brown (Head of Housing and Community), Arjan de Jong (Strategic Housing Manager), Richard Appiah-Ampofo (Senior Accountant) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

14 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Homelessness Expenditure & Action Plan update:

Councillor Bernie Muir, Other Interest: In the interest of openness and transparency, Councillor Bernie Muir declared that she was a Governor of the Surrey and Borders Partnership Board.

16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the minutes and the restricted minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2025 for the Leisure Centre Contract, the minutes and the restricted minutes of the special meeting of the Committee held on 17 June 2025 for Relate Funding, and the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 08 July 2025, and authorised the Chair to sign them.

17 MUSEUM POLICIES

The Committee received a report seeking approval of four key policy documents and forward plan, essential for maintaining accreditation and demonstrating strong governance and strategic planning for the Museum Service.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Forward Plan.** In response to a question from a Member, the Museum Curator stated that much of the forward plan was contingent on the successful acquisition of grant funding. She stated that the Covid pandemic had been significantly disruptive to the previous iteration of the forward plan.
- b) **Equality Impact Assessment.** In response to a question from a Member, the Museum Curator confirmed that, should the Access Policy be approved, an equality impact assessment would be carried out.
- c) **Human Remains Policy.** In response to a question from a Member, the Museum Curator explained that although section 10.1 of the proposed collections development policy set out that the museum doesn't hold or intend to acquire any human remains, section 15.2 setting out the procedure for the disposal of human remains was included as a caveat for in the event of any human remains being discovered within the collection.
- d) **Partnerships with Educational Establishments.** In response to a question from a Member, the Museum Curator explained that the museum has an Audience Development Plan which addresses the importance of forming partnerships with local schools and universities and making the museum and its collections available for student project and research work.
- e) **Successful Grants.** In response to a question from a Member, the Museum Curator stated that the museum had recently been successful in applying for a £3000 grant to Surrey Museums Partnership for a new object documentation system, along with a grant for £4000 from Surrey Museum Development South-East for a new display case to display the museum's roman coins collection for the first time.
- f) **Volunteers.** In response to a comment from a Member, the Museum Curator highlighted the importance of the role that volunteers play in the success of the museum and stated that the museum was fortunate to have a very high-quality team of volunteers.
- g) **Modernisation.** In response to a comment from a Member, the Museum curator stated that, following a successful grant application, a project would soon be underway with a view to redesigning and modernising the museum space.
- h) **Promotion.** In response to a comment from a Member, the Museum Curator stated that the Bourne Hall team make use of social media and flyers to advertise and promote the museum and its events, along with the Surrey Museums Partnership also advertising for the museum.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve the key policy documents for the Museum Service, as set out in the appendices to the report:**

- **Care and Conservation Policy**
- **Documentation Policy**
- **Access Policy**
- **Collections Development Policy**
- **Forward Plan 2025–2029**

18 HOMELESSNESS EXPENDITURE & ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Committee received a report setting out the ongoing actions taken to minimise homelessness expenditure and identifying the funding which will be utilised to cover the additional expenditure for 2025/26.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- Nightly Paid Accommodation Numbers.** In response to a comment from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager confirmed that the statistic for the number of people in nightly paid accommodation is not a static figure, with a constant flow of people moving in and out.
- Homelessness Prevention.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager stated that the objective of the prevention of homelessness was ingrained throughout the work of the entire Housing team, with a Housing Options Officer specialising in the matter.
- Landlords Forum.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager explained that the Landlords Forums were held to raise awareness for landlords and inform them of the Council's schemes, along with any changes to legislative and licensing requirements. The forums also provide an opportunity for landlords to network and develop relationships with the Council.
- Renters' Rights Act 2025.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager stated that in his view the introduction of the Renters' Rights Act 2025 was a positive change and would be beneficial in efforts towards preventing homelessness.
- Action Plan Progress.** In response to a question from a Member referring to action 6.10 of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan, the Strategic Housing Manager explained that completion of the action was being worked towards, though had experienced some delays.
- Short-Notice Referrals.** In response to questions from Members, the Strategic Housing Manager stated that the Housing service was experiencing pressure as a result of people with housing needs arriving at

the Town Hall, sometimes with significant mental or physical health requirements, having been directed to the Council by hospitals/agencies without the housing team having received proper prior notice. He stated that the housing team sought to form stronger relationships and raise awareness with said organisations in order for the Council to be better able in supporting the people referred to the Council by said agencies.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the priority actions points which have been taken to manage homelessness over the past 6 months.**
- (2) Note the use of Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) and homelessness grant reserves to cover the anticipated increase in expenditure, for 2025/26, to enable the Council to meet its duties under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.**
- (3) Agree that a further update regarding nightly paid accommodation (NPA) expenditure be provided at the Community & Wellbeing Committee in March 2026.**

19 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION RENT ARREARS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Committee received a report seeking approval of the updated Rent Arrears Policy and Procedure outlining how the Council manages rental income, rent arrears, and possession proceedings for non-secure tenants and licensees living in interim and temporary accommodation provided or managed by the Council.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Support Offered.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager stated that, in instances of people being unable to or struggling to pay their rent, the housing service can offer support by way of raising awareness of the available assistance and benefits schemes in order to help alleviate financial pressures.
- b) **Accommodation Size.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager stated that the housing team always seeks to place people in appropriate accommodation according to household size.
- c) **Subsidised Rent.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager explained that the amount that the Council can charge for rent is capped under statute, with the Council subsidising the difference between the actual rent cost and the amount chargeable by the Council.
- d) **In the Event of Eviction.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager explained that if a person had been evicted from a property by the Council as a last resort option, where all other

methods of resolution had been unsuccessful and all requirements of the pre-action protocol had been met, that person would be found as intentionally homeless should they reapproach the Council.

- e) **Debt Management.** In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Housing and Community stated that the Council works closely with and signposts people to organisations such as the Good Company, who can offer advice to people with respect to debt management.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve and adopt the Council's new Rent Arrears Policy and Procedure for Temporary Accommodation, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.**

20 2026/27 BUDGET TARGETS

The Committee received a report informing the Committee of the Council's revenue budget targets presented to the Strategy & Resources Committee in July. The report sought guidance on the preparation of the Committee's service estimates for 2026/27.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Homelessness Prevention.** In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Housing and Community explained that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had stipulated that 49% of funding for homelessness is to be focussed on prevention work.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the implications of the budget targets presented to Strategy & Resources Committee on 15 July 2025.**
- (2) Note that owing to the Council's projected budget deficit, any additional new revenue growth items (i.e. service enhancements resulting in increased net expenditure) supported by Policy Committees will need to be fully funded from existing budgets.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.30 pm

COUNCILLOR CLIVE WOODBRIDGE (CHAIR)