

Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 11 November 2025

PRESENT -

Councillor Hannah Dalton (Chair); Councillor Neil Dallen (Vice-Chair); Councillors Steve Bridger (as nominated substitute for Councillor John Beckett), Kate Chinn, James Lawrence, Lucie McIntyre and Humphrey Reynolds

In Attendance: Councillor Alex Coley, Councillor Julie Morris and Councillor Bernie Muir

Absent: Councillor John Beckett and Councillor Jan Mason

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Victoria Potts (Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration), Andrew Bircher (Assistant Director of Corporate Services), Cagdas Canbolat (Director of Corporate Services (S151)), Piero Ionta (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Manager)

32 CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

The Committee resolved with 6 votes for and 1 abstention to:

Appoint Councillor Hannah Dalton to act as the Chair and Councillor Neil Dallen to act as the Vice Chair for this meeting of the Committee.

33 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members made the following declarations in relation to items on the agenda for the meeting:

Commercial Property Update

Councillor Neil Dallen, Other Interest: Councillor Neil Dallen declared that he had received a letter from Steve Whiteway on behalf of the organisation.

35 TOWN HALL MOVE

The Committee received a report setting out that in May 2025 Full Council agreed to reverse the decision over the relocation of the civic office to 70 East Street and the Council Chamber to Bourne Hall, in light of Local Government Reorganisation. Alternative interim solutions had been investigated and the report presented four options and their associated costs for utilising the existing town hall building(s).

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Fire Risk Assessment.** In response to a Member question regarding the proposed £430k spend, the Head of Property and Regeneration explained that prior to the Local Government Reorganisation decision to move to 70 East Street the fire risk assessment had several criteria that needed to be complied with. The Fire Authority was happy for these not be undertaken because of the move. The Head of Property and Regeneration reassured committee that the building was safe but there was work needed around fire compartmentalisation of the old town hall to ensure it remained safe for the future.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Approve Option 1 for implementation as the best value option**
- (2) **Approve a capital budget of up to £517,200 for the delivery of Option 1.**
- (3) **Nominate and authorise the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the S151 officer, to approve all necessary project expenditure and release of funds from budget/reserves (up to the approved limit above) through to completion and delivery.**
- (4) **Nominate and authorise the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with the S151 officer and Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee to approve expenditure up to the deferred liability limit (set out in para 2.5 as £477,500) and release of funds from budget/reserves, where necessary, to be able to undertake urgent works.**

36 STAFF PAY AWARD

The Committee received a report providing information and options for a recommendation to Council for a staff pay award for 2026/27.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Additional day leave.** A Member asked if option 2 included the proposed additional day leave. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services

confirmed that the additional day leave was applicable to all options in the report.

- b) **Real Living Wage.** A Member asked for clarification on how the National Living Wage was to be funded and its inclusion in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The Director for Corporate Services confirmed that this was already part of the MTFS as reported to committee in July 2025 and that the Real Living Wage would be funded from contingencies as part of the MTFS.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Recommend to full council a pay award for staff for 2026/27 based on option 2 – a 3% pay award (as set out in section 5 of the report).**
- (2) Recommend to full council that funding is approved to support the implementation of the Real Living Wage from April 2026.**

37 REVIEW OF RESERVES

The Committee received a report presenting a review of reserves and recommending prudent reserve balances to ensure sound management of the Council's finances.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the new assumptions made for Property Income Equalisation, Collection Fund Equalisation and Interest Equalisation Reserves.**
- (2) Reappropriate identified reserves into Corporate Projects and Maintenance Reserves to support council priorities.**

38 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes and Restricted Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 September and authorised the Chair to sign them.

39 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

During the Committee's debate on Item 7 of the agenda (EEBC 2025-2027 Strategic Priorities 3 & 4), the Committee considered that due to the sensitivity of the information contained within the appendices to the report, an exclusion of the Press and Public would be necessary in order to enable effective debate on the matter in question.

The Chair proposed a motion that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 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.

The Committee unanimously agreed the motion as set out by the Chair.

40 EEBC 2025-2027 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 3 & 4

The Committee received a report which outlined the progress made on the Council's 2025-2027 property related Strategic Priorities 3 and 4.

The matters that were considered by the Committee in relation to this item following the exclusion of the Press and Public is recorded in a separate (not for publication) restricted minute.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the update and progress made as set out in the report below.**
- (2) Note that the Town Hall remains in operational use.**
- (3) Agree that the Council remains actively engaged with regard to potential future funding streams and opportunities in relation to progressing its pipeline of potential development sites.**
- (4) Agree that 70 East Street is declared surplus to operational requirements.**
- (5) Agree that 70 East Street is marketed for sale with a budget provision of up to £10,000 for associated upfront costs.**
- (6) Nominate and authorise the Head of Property & Regeneration to take forward the necessary steps to place 70 East Street on the market.**
- (7) Note an Exempt 70 East Street marketing progress report will be brought back to this Committee's meeting on 27 January 2026.**
- (8) Note the findings of the completed EEPIC review.**
- (9) Note the findings of the completed Community, Operational and Commercial asset reviews.**
- (10) Note that if a report comes to transfer assets it will be supported with a full business case.**

41 CLEANING CONTRACT

The Committee received a report regarding the extension of the cleaning contract covering all council venues.

The matters that were considered by the Committee in relation to this item following the exclusion of the Press and Public is recorded in a separate (not for publication) restricted minute.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved with 6 votes for and 1 abstention to

- (1) Note the intention of officers to award the extension of contract to Churchill Contract Services Ltd for cleaning services for Epsom and Ewell Council for the next two years, being the final contract extension allowable under the current contract;**
- (2) Approve the contract spend as set out in paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 of the report and**
- (3) Nominate and authorise the Head of Property and Regeneration to take forward the necessary steps to complete the extension of the contract.**

42 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY UPDATE

The Committee received a report considering options for the future use of an existing commercial property.

The matters that were considered by the Committee in relation to this item following the exclusion of the Press and Public is recorded in a separate (not for publication) restricted minute.

Following consideration, the Committee resolved:

With 6 votes for and 1 abstention to:

- (1) Agree to Option 3 as recommended in paragraph 7.4 of the report to negotiate a new lease at the appropriate level of rent to reflect the mixed community and commercial uses being undertaken at the site.**

With 6 votes for and 1 vote against to:

- (2) Agree a budget of up to £10,000 to cover any potential external commercial agent fees and legal fees.**
- (3) Nominate and authorise the Head of Property & Regeneration to take forward the necessary steps to progress the chosen option.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.00 pm

COUNCILLOR HANNAH DALTON (CHAIR)