

**Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on  
30 July 2019**

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**PRESENT -**

Councillor Clive Smitheram (Chairman); Councillor Colin Keane (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Arthur Abdulin, Steve Bridger, Kate Chinn, Nigel Collin, Hannah Dalton, Neil Dallen (as nominated substitute for Councillor Eber Kington), David Gulland and Barry Nash

In Attendance: Amber Banister (Audit Manager) (Grant Thornton (External Auditor)) (Items 01 - 05 only)

Absent: Councillor Eber Kington

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Damian Roberts (Chief Operating Officer), Lee Duffy (Chief Finance Officer), Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Gillian McTaggart (Head of Policy, Performance & Governance), Ruth Ormella (Head of Planning) (Items 01 - 03 only), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Brendan Bradley (Chief Accountant), Tony Foxwell (Senior Surveyor) (Items 01 - 08 only) and Tim Richardson (Committee Administrator)

**1 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Colin Keane was appointed Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

**2 QUESTION TIME**

No questions were asked or had been submitted by members of the public.

**3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor David Gulland, Other Interest: In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor David Gulland declared that he had been the Treasurer and a Trustee of the Horton Chapel Arts & Heritage Society, but had resigned these positions.

**4 ALLOCATION OF PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT RESERVE**

The Committee received a report updating it on the allocation of funds from the Planning Delivery Grant Reserve and presenting an updated proposal for allocation of funds required to support the current Local Plan delivery schedule.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

- (1) **To approve the use of the balance of the Planning Delivery Grant Reserve to support the work on the Local Plan over the period 2019 – 2021, as set-out in Section 3 of the report.**

## 5 STONES ROAD ALLOTMENT SITE

The Committee received a report summarising a number of options considered in seeking to propose a long-term future for the former Stones Road Allotment site, and recommending that an application should be made to remove the site from its statutory designation as allotment land.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Protection of Great Crested Newt population.** The Committee considered the need for adjoining land owners to manage their sites in a manner which supported the protection of the Stones Road Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and in particular it's Great Crested Newt population. It was noted that officers had been in contact Surrey County Council regarding this, as the County Council was the land owner of the adjoining Confer Park Gypsy site.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee:**

- (1) **noted the options that had been considered in arriving at the suggested way forward for the Stones Road Allotment site;**
- (2) **approved the removal of the Stones Road Allotment site from its classification as statutory allotment land by way of an application to the Secretary of State;**
- (3) **delegated authority to the Chief Legal Officer to take all necessary steps to secure the declassification of Stones Road Allotment as allotment land.**

## 6 2018/19 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT FINDINGS

The Committee received a report covering Grant Thornton's audit findings and presenting the Statement of Accounts for 2018/19 following the external audit.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts and thanks to Officers.** The Committee noted that the External Auditor proposed an unqualified opinion of the Council's Accounts, and was informed by the Chairman that this was the 20<sup>th</sup> year in a row that this had been achieved. The Committee expressed its thanks and congratulations to the Chief Finance Officer, Chief Accountant and their team for their work to achieve this. In particular, the Committee thanked the Chief Accountant for his work to accommodate changes in pension regulations.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee:**

- (1) Approved the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2019;**
- (2) Agreed the Annual Governance Statement included within the Statement of Accounts;**
- (3) Received the Audit Findings for 2018/19;**
- (4) Agreed the management action in response to audit recommendations;**
- (5) Agreed that the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee and the Chief Finance Officer sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Council;**
- (6) Delegated any further amendments to the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee.**

**7 2018/19 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT**

The Committee received a report summarising the Council's financial performance for 2018/19 and detailing the capital budgets to be carried forward for schemes where costs would be incurred in 2019/20.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee:-**

- (1) Received the report on financial outturn for 2018/19;**
- (2) Noted the carry forward £4.910 million budget for capital schemes to be added to the 2019/20 capital programme.**
- (3) Agreed that the one-off gain, generated in 2018/19 from the 100% Business Rates Pilot, should be set-aside to mitigate the potential future impact of both business rates appeals and the Fair Funding Review on the Council's funding, as detailed in section 4 of the report.**

**8 2018-19 TREASURY MANAGEMENT YEAR-END PERFORMANCE**

The Committee received a report reviewing the performance of the council's treasury management function in 2018/19.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee:-**

- (1) received the report on the Council's treasury management performance 2018/19;**
- (2) approved the actual 2018/19 prudential indicators.**

**9 EPSOM CEMETERY EXTENSION**

The Committee received a report providing an update on the current position of the Epsom Cemetery extension and seeking approval for an additional budget requirement of £150k.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee:**

- (1) Noted the progress to date;**
- (2) Agreed to fund the increased works cost of £150,000 from the Corporate Projects Reserve.**

**10 EWELL COURT HOUSE**

The Committee received a report exploring the opportunity and potential benefits from entering into a partnership with a specialist from the wedding and events sector to maximise the public and community use of Ewell Court House. This approach had been recommended by the Council's Community and Wellbeing Committee at its meeting on 20 June 2019.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee:**

- (1) Agreed the approach set out in the report to increase bookings at Ewell Court House and put the building on a more financially sustainable footing.**
- (2) Agreed that officers seek to appoint, through a competitive selection process, a suitable specialist partner to manage bookings and events at Ewell Court House as well as day to day maintenance through a leasehold agreement.**
- (3) Agreed that subject to the successful outcome of the selection process, to delegate the decision to agree terms and enter into an agreement with the specialist partner organisation for a period of no more than 15 years to the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of Strategy and Resources Committee.**

**11 FUTURE40 - DRAFT LONG-TERM VISION FOR EPSOM AND EWELL**

The Committee received a report detailing the outcomes from the Future 40 public engagement, and setting out the next steps in bringing forward a new vision and putting in place arrangements to oversee its successful implementation.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee:**

- (1) **Agreed the draft long-term vision for Epsom and Ewell set out in paragraphs 6.5 and 6.6 of the report for further stakeholder engagement.**
- (2) **Noted that the Committee was due to consider the Council's new draft Corporate Plan 2020-2024 at its 26 November meeting.**

## **12 MANAGEMENT OF UNREASONABLE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

The Committee received a report presenting a policy to protect staff and councillors from unreasonable customer behaviour which could hinder the handling of a customer's complaint or request. The policy also reminded customers that the Borough Council has a zero tolerance towards unacceptable behaviour.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

### **That the Committee:**

- (1) **resolved that the Management of Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy (attached at Annex 1 to the report) be agreed with immediate effect;**
- (2) **Agreed to delegate to the Chief Legal Officer in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee any updating of the Policy which may be necessary to reflect good practice.**

## **13 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SHAREHOLDER SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee received a report requesting it to agree the appointment of Members and a Chairman to the Shareholder Sub Committee in accordance with the Sub Committee's Terms of Reference.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

- (1) **That the Committee appointed the following Members and Chairman for the Shareholder Sub Committee as required by its Terms of Reference:**
  - **Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman)**
  - **Councillor Clive Smitheram**
  - **Councillor Barry Nash**
  - **Councillor Neil Dallen**
  - **Councillor Kate Chinn**

#### 14 CAPITAL MEMBER GROUP

The Committee received a report requesting it to consider appointments to the Capital Member Group, approve an increase in budget of the Disabled Facilities programme and to agree the capital bidding process for 2020/21 to 2022/23.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Payback criteria for renewable energy projects.** Following a question from a Committee Member, Officers informed the Committee that it was not proposed to extend the payback period for projects (which was 7 years in the case of renewable energy projects), as doing so increased the risk that the projected income/saving from the project would become unreliable. In exceptional cases a project which required a longer payback period could be presented to the relevant Committee for consideration.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee:**

- (1) **Appointed the following Members to the Capital Member Group:**

- **Councillor Eber Kington (Chairman)**
- **Councillor Neil Dallen**
- **Councillor Colin Keane**
- **Councillor Barry Nash**
- **Councillor David Gulland**

- (2) **Approved the increase in budget of £42,090 for the Disabled Facilities programme, in line with the allocation of central government grant funding;**

- (3) **Confirmed the criteria for considering capital bids as set out in paragraph 9.1;**

- (4) **Confirmed the criteria for assessing 'spend to save' capital bids as set out in paragraph 9.2.**

#### 15 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CIL PANEL AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee received a report requesting that it agree the membership and the terms of reference for the CIL Panel.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

**That the Committee approved :-**

- (1) **The membership of the Panel being: the Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee, the Chair of Community & Wellbeing Committee and Councillor**

**Nigel Collin as a nominated member from the Strategy & Resources Committee;**

- (2) The following substitutes for the Panel: the Vice Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee; the Vice Chair of Community & Wellbeing Committee and one additional member of Strategy & Resources Committee;**
- (3) The terms of reference for the CIL Panel;**
- (4) To delegate to the Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee who in conjunction with the Chair of Community & Wellbeing can agree any changes to the nominated member from Strategy & Resources Committee or substitutes;**
- (5) To delegate to the Chief Finance Officer, who in conjunction with the Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee agree the annual allocation for CIL 15% funded projects.**

## **16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 2 April 2019 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

*The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.41 pm*

COUNCILLOR CLIVE SMITHERAM (CHAIRMAN)