

Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held on 28 July 2020

PRESENT -

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

In Attendance: Councillor Bernie Muir, Councillor Alex Coley, Councillor Luke Giles and Councillor Steven McCormick

Officers present: Kathryn Beldon (Chief Executive), Damian Roberts (Chief Operating Officer), Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Shona Mason (Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Brendan Bradley (Chief Accountant), Sarah Keeble (Democratic Services Officer) and Tim Richardson (Committee Administrator)

7 QUESTION TIME

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

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

9 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received a report presenting the Strategic Asset Management Plan and providing a strategic framework for managing the Council's land and property assets over the 10 year period to 2030.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Assets included in Plan.** The Committee noted that the Plan included assets directly owned by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. It did not include assets held by other bodies, such as Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators, Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee or Epsom & Ewell Property Investment Company.
- b) **Equality impact assessments.** The Committee was informed that equality impact assessments would be undertaken for individual properties as proposals for redevelopment or reconfiguration were brought forward. Following a question from a Member, the Committee

noted that the word “substantial” could be removed from paragraph 4.1.1 of the report.

- c) **Impact of changes to the planning system.** A Member asked a question regarding the impact of changes to the national planning system on the management of the council’s assets. The Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that if the Council wished to redevelop an existing asset the process to do so was likely to be a little more straightforward as a result of the changes, but that the Council would still be bound by strategic context it had set out in the Asset Management Plan, its Vision, Climate Change Action Plan, Housing Delivery Action Plan and other strategic documents.
- d) **Analysis of services.** Following a question from a Councillor, the Committee was informed that internal expertise was used to analyse/review services in the first instance. External assistance would be obtained if required following this.
- e) **Income from allotments and miscellaneous items.** The Committee was informed that income levels from allotments and miscellaneous items were not included in the Asset Management Plan due to being of very low value.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

- (1) **That the Committee approved the Asset Management Plan 2020-30.**

10 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION COMMUNICATIONS PEER REVIEW

The Committee received a report providing details of the LGA Communications Peer Review process and details of their findings.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Citizens’ Panel.** The Committee noted that the purpose and membership of the Council’s Citizens’ Panel would be reviewed as a part of the Action Plan following the LGA Review.
- b) **Interim Communications and Engagement Manager.** The Committee was informed that an Interim Communications and Engagement Manager had been appointed by the Council in April and had contributed to the response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The appointment would be in position until the end of October 2020. Following a question from a Member, it was noted that information relating to the cost, budget and measurement of output for the appointment would be provided to Members following the meeting.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

- (1) **That the Committee noted the content and recommendations of the LGA Communications Peer Review.**

11 2019-20 FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT

The Committee received a report summarising the Council's financial performance for 2019/20 and detailing the capital budgets to be carried forward for schemes where costs will be incurred in 2020/21.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

- (1) **Received the report on financial outturn for 2019/20;**
- (2) **Noted the carry forward £3.682 million budget for capital schemes to be added to the 2020/21 capital programme.**
- (3) **Approved the change of funding for the Cemetery Extension capital project, as set-out in section 6 of the report.**

12 2019-20 TREASURY MANAGEMENT YEAR-END PERFORMANCE

The Committee received a report presenting the Council's treasury management performance in 2019/20.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Source of funding, purchase of Emerald House.** Following a question from a Member, the Committee was informed that the Council had utilised its cash balances to purchase Emerald House, rather than using funds loaned by the Public Works Loans Board. This had saved interest payable to the Board.
- b) **Return on investments.** The Committee noted that the Council received a rate of 0.8% interest on its investments. Officers informed the Committee that the investments made by the Council were guided by the principle of security of investment. This affected the risk which could be taken and in turn, the yield achievable. Officers informed the Committee that a return of 0.8% was higher than the London Inter-bank loan rate for last year. The Committee was informed that it would be difficult to attain a yield as high as 0.8% in the current year, as the Bank of England had cut interest rates to 0.1%.
- c) **Environmental impact.** Following a question from a Member, the Committee was informed that the guiding principles for the Council's investments were security, liquidity and yield. In addition to those principles, environmental considerations would also be taken into account.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

- (1) **Received the report on the Council's treasury management performance 2019/20;**
- (2) **Approved the 2019/20 prudential indicators.**

13 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 2021/22 to 2023/24.

Following consideration, it was resolved that the Committee:

- (1) Appointed the following Members to the Capital Member Group: Councillors Eber Kington (Chair), Barry Nash, Neil Dallen, Collin Keane and Kate Chinn;**
- (2) Approved the increase in budget of £92,090 for the Disabled Facilities programme, in line with the allocation of central government grant funding;**
- (4) Confirmed the criteria for considering capital bids as set out in paragraph 9.1;**
- (5) Confirmed the criteria for assessing 'spend to save' capital bids as set out in paragraph 9.2.**

14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 30 January 2020 were agreed as a true record, and the Committee authorised the Chairman to sign them.

15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Committee passed a resolution 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 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.

16 SUPPORT WITH REOPENING LEISURE SERVICES

The decision for this item is recorded in a separate (not for publication) restricted Minute.

The meeting began at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.59 pm

COUNCILLOR EBER KINGTON (CHAIRMAN)