

Strategy and Resources Committee

14 November 2023

URGENT DECISIONS

Head of Service: Andrew Bircher, Interim Director of Corporate Services

Wards affected: (All Wards);

Urgent Decision?(yes/no) No

If yes, reason urgent decision required:

Appendices (attached):

Summary

To report to this committee the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with Appendix 2 to the Constitution – The Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.1 since the last meeting.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) To note the urgent decisions taken and the reasons for those decisions, since the last meeting of the Committee.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To report to this committee the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with Appendix 2 to the Constitution – The Scheme of Delegation paragraph 3.1.

2 Background

- 2.1 Appendix 2 to the Constitution – The scheme of delegation sets out at Paragraph 3.1 that the Chief Executive and Directors are authorised to take decisions on grounds of urgency regarding matters which would otherwise be reserved for determination by a Committee or Council. A matter can be deemed urgent if, in the reasonable opinion of the officer concerned, a delay would seriously prejudice the interest of the Council or of the public and it is not practicable to convene a quorate meeting of the relevant decision-making body in sufficient time to take the decision.

Strategy and Resources Committee

14 November 2023

- 2.2 Since the last meeting of the strategy and Resources Committee, two urgent decisions have been taken. Both were agreed with the Chair of this committee. They are as follows:

Urgent decision 1

- 2.3 Surrey County Council has invited EEBC to join the Surrey/Sutton business rates pool for 2024/25 and requested that the Council urgently agree a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU allows Surrey CC to submit an application to form the pool to DLUHC by the 10 October deadline.
- 2.4 The key benefits to EEBC from being in the pool are expected to be:
- Projected additional retained business rates income of £150k for EEBC in 2024/25, although the actual benefit will depend on the actual rate of business rates growth in the year;
 - The MoU confirms that each individual authority will receive at least the same level of funding they would have received without the pool (i.e. no District will be worse off from being in the pool)
 - The gains from being in the pool would be split 50:50 between County and the Districts

Urgent decision 2

- 2.5 The council wrote to public 6th form schools in the borough to make them aware of the Chuter Ede fund and to invite applications. In total 7 applications were received which would allow a payment of £250 to each applicant. This is for support for living expenses or course materials to help Epsom and Ewell residents when starting at university. At this level of payment, there are sufficient funds in the trust to make payments from the interest accrued.
- 2.6 This is the first time in many years that we have made this payment, so it has been discussed with the Chair of the committee. The reason for marking it as an urgent item is the fact that S&R committee acts as the Trustee, rather than the value of the payments involved.
- 2.7 As a result of the timings it was expected that the payments should be made as soon after term commences, which is prior to the date of this committee.

Urgent decision 3

- 2.8 The gas supply contract for the Council's metered buildings was close to expiry and via an energy consultant, quotations were received from multiple suppliers.

Strategy and Resources Committee

14 November 2023

- 2.9 The Council took advantage of relatively low July gas pricing by signing a 3-year fixed unit cost gas contract. The new contract was 2.25 x the cost of the Council's previous 3-year fixed contract agreed in 2020 i.e. prior to the Ukraine War which prompted a 6-fold increase in gas prices and government intervention. By taking fixed rate contracts at favourable rates, the Council has avoided the high gas prices incurred by some organisations.
- 2.10 By signing a 3-year contract, the risk of future price increases is mitigated and it provides the Council with reasonable certainty for medium term financial planning.

3 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

- 3.1 Equality Impact Assessment
- 3.1.1 None arise from this report.
- 3.2 Crime & Disorder
- 3.2.1 None arise from this report.
- 3.3 Safeguarding
- 3.3.1 None arise from this report.
- 3.4 Dependencies
- 3.4.1 none
- 3.5 Other
- 3.5.1 none

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** These are set out as above.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 **Legal Officer's comments:** There are no legal issues that arise from this report.

6 Background papers

- 6.1 The Urgent decisions have already been published on members news.