

Minutes of the Meeting of the STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 12 November 2024

PRESENT -

Councillor Neil Dallen (Chair); Councillor Hannah Dalton (Vice-Chair); Councillors Kate Chinn, Alex Coley, Alison Kelly, Robert Leach, Lucie McIntyre and Phil Neale

In Attendance: Councillor Steven McCormick

Officers present: Jackie King (Chief Executive), Andrew Bircher (Interim Director of Corporate Services), Kevin Hanlon (Interim Chief Finance Officer), Piero Ionta (Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer), Mark Shephard (Head of Property and Regeneration), Justin Turvey (Head of Place Development), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant), Arjan de Jong (Strategic Housing Manager), Emma Hill (Principal Programme Manager), Will Mace (Business Assurance Manager) and Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Manager)

31 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Committee received one statement from a member of the public.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors made the following declarations in relation to items on the agenda for this meeting of the Committee:

Epsom and Ewell Community Infrastructure Levy - Annual Funding Awards

Councillor Alex Coley, Other Interest: Councillor Alex Coley declared that he was a member of CIL Working Group and did not feel able to take part in the Committee's consideration of this item. Councillor Alex Coley left the Council Chamber prior to the debate on this item being held by the Committee and returned to the room following conclusion of the Committee's consideration of the item. Councillor Alex Coley was not present for and did not participate in the Committee's debate or vote on this item.

Epsom and Ewell Community Infrastructure Levy - Annual Funding Awards

Councillor Kate Chinn, Other Interest: In the interest of openness and transparency Councillor Kate Chinn declared that her son was a member of the Nam Yang Martial Arts Club but that this did not make any difference to her decision making.

Epsom and Ewell Community Infrastructure Levy - Annual Funding Awards

Councillor Phil Neale, Other Interest: In the interest of openness and transparency Councillor Phil Neale declared that he had seconded the motion with regard to the inclusion of the Nam Yang Martial Arts Club for consideration at this meeting. Councillor Phil Neale informed the Committee that he approached the matter with an open mind and was not predetermined.

33 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes and Restricted Minutes of the Meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee held on 17 September 2024 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

34 CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS - PROCUREMENT ACT UPDATE

The Committee received a report proposing changes to the Contract Standing Orders ('CSOs').

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Correction to report documentation - Implementation date.** The Interim Director of Corporate Resources informed the Committee of a correction to the report documentation. This correction was that the implementation date required by the Procurement Act 2023 was February 2025, not October 2024 as stated in the report documentation.
- b) **Engagement with small & medium local enterprises (SMEs).** In response to a question from a Member, the Business Assurance Manager informed the Committee that the Procurement Act aimed to support engagement with local SMEs by seeking to make the requirements asked of suppliers proportionate to the relevant procurement threshold.
- c) **Low value purchases.** In response to a question from a Member, the Business Assurance Manager informed the Committee that a best value exercise would be required for all purchases within Threshold 1 (£0-£9999). Whilst it might not be possible to receive a formal quote for some low value items within this threshold, officers would be expected to check several sources prior to completing a procurement.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Request Full Council to approve the revisions to the Contract Standing Orders, with respect to the Procurement Act 2023 and document formatting, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (2) **Request Full Council to approve the revisions to the Contract Standing Orders, with respect to those not mandated by the Procurement Act 2023, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.**

35 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

The Committee received a report presenting an annual review of the Risk Management Strategy.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Review and audit of project management.** In response to a question from a member, the Business Assurance Manager informed the Committee that the Council's project management governance documentation sets out that spot checks of project risks would be undertaken and that it would be subject to audit.
- b) **Risk management software.** In response to a request from a member, the Business Assurance Manager informed the Committee that new software used by the council enabled the allocation of risk responsibility to officers and provided a dashboard and notifications both to the risk owner and their line manager. This provided a greater level of visibility of risk management information. An example of the benefit of the software was the performance management reports presented to Audit and Scrutiny Committee which were produced in the system.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve the revisions to the Risk Management Strategy as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.**

36 EPSOM AND EWELL COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - ANNUAL FUNDING AWARDS

The Committee received a report presenting the recommendations of the CIL Working Group as required by the Council's financial regulations and CIL Spending Protocol. These recommendations had been considered and supported by the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) at its meeting on 17 October 2024.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Receipt of CIL funding by Epsom and Ewell borough Council in the past 2 years.** In response to a question from a member relating to whether any Neighbourhood CIL funding had been received by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council in the past 2 years, the Place Development Manager informed the Committee he would check and provide a response following the meeting.
- b) **Finance.** In response to a question from a member the chair informed the Committee that it was never foreseen that Strategic CIL funds would be sufficient to respond to all the council's strategic funding needs. The

Committee was also informed that Neighbourhood CIL funding bids were assessed each year.

- c) **Additional neighbourhood CIL scheme put forward by LPPC.** Members of the Committee expressed their support for the work of the Nam Yang Martial Arts Club. Following consideration of the scheme and the recommendation of the CIL Member Working Group that the scheme not be approved this year, the Committee moved to the vote on this matter as set out below.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Approve and ratify the recommendations of the CIL Working Group as supported by the Licencing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) as set out in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.7 of the report**

The Committee resolved with 3 votes for and 4 votes against supporting an additional neighbourhood scheme receiving funding as requested by the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC). Accordingly, it was the Committee's decision to:

- (2) **not support an additional neighbourhood scheme receiving funding as requested by LPPC.**

37 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an update on progress against the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, approved at Strategy & Resources Committee in July 2024 following the Peer Challenge in March 2024.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Create capacity for strategic political and managerial leadership.** In response to a question from a member, the Chief Executive informed the Committee that additional roles of Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Director had been included in the role of existing staff. This had been introduced and announced to staff earlier in the day and that information would be provided to councillors in MembersNews. The relevant staff would receive a supplement to their base salary, which was covered within existing budgets due to savings from combining two posts.
- b) **Strategic capacity – housing.** In response to a question from a member, the Principal Programme Manager informed the Committee of the actions that had been undertaken to increase strategic capacity in the Housing Service, including the creation of a Strategic Housing Group.
- c) **Delivery of actions.** In response to a question from a member, the Principal Programme Manager informed the committee that the delivery of actions from the Action Plan was being monitored through the council's P-hub software.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the progress against the actions set out within the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan.**
- (2) **Note the amendment to the completion dates of the actions highlighted within the Action Plan as attached as Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (3) **Approve the Terms of Reference as attached as Appendix 2 to the report and confirm the Member Induction and Development Programme task & finish group.**
- (4) **Approve the Terms of Reference as attached as Appendix 3 to the report and confirm the task & finish group of members and officers to develop the corporate priorities into a five-year plan.**

38 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND: ROUND 3

The Committee received a report seeking approval to enter into an agreement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to purchase 5 properties for use as in Borough temporary accommodation and 1 property for use as an Afghan resettlement home as part of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. To be funded by £1,493,250 from the Local Authority Housing Fund 3 and a Council contribution of £750,000 from s106 commuted sums.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Identification of properties and timescale for funding.** In response to a question from a member, the Strategic Housing Manager informed the Committee that the Council had already identified a couple of potential properties and that the first tranche of funding was anticipated by January 2025.
- b) **Nature of properties.** In response to a question from a member, the Strategic Housing Manager informed the Committee that the MHCLG had indicated a preference for freehold properties to be purchased through the scheme but would also accept leasehold properties with a minimum 125 year lease. Properties would be required to have at least 2 bedrooms.
- c) **Maintenance of properties.** In response to a question from a member, the Strategic Housing Manager informed the Committee that maintenance and management of the properties would be provided within existing resources. The Committee was informed that officers were looking for properties in as good a condition as possible, at a minimum EPC rating of C.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Agree to enter into an agreement with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to receive £1,493,250 funding, to enable the purchase of one resettlement home for an Afghan family on the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and five properties for use as temporary accommodation for homeless households in Epsom & Ewell.**
- (2) **Approve an allocation of £750,000 from Section 106 commuted sums held by the Council to ensure sufficient funding is available for the purchase of six properties**
- (3) **Authorise the Council to sign the Memo of Understanding attached as Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (4) **Nominate and authorise the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration to purchase six properties at a cost of no more than £2,243,250, in consultation with the Council's Chief Finance and Chief Legal Officers. Those properties are to meet the criteria identified within the Memo of Understanding entered into with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).**
- (5) **Nominate and authorise the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration to transfer a payment of up to £375,000 for the purchase of the ACRS unit to Town & Country Housing (TCH) on the terms set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.**
- (6) **Nominate and Authorise the Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration to negotiate and sign the Grant Agreement (either as attached as Appendix 2 to the report or as amended) further to consultation with the Council's Chief Finance and Chief Legal Officers.**

39 PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME

The Committee received a report seeking to extend the maximum number of Private Sector Leased properties for the provision of temporary accommodation for homeless households which the Council manages, to a maximum of 25 and to permit the renewal of current PSL leases when they end.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Maintenance responsibility.** In response to a question from a member, the Strategic Housing Manager informed the Committee that during the lease period for the properties the Council would be responsible for small repairs and was responsible to hand the property back at the end of the lease with fair wear and tear. The Council had budgeted £500 per annum for repairs to the properties leased under the scheme and officers were confident that this would be more than adequate.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Agree to expand the PSL scheme for the provision of temporary accommodation from the current maximum number of 15 to 25.**
- (2) Nominate and Authorise the Head of Housing and Community to enter into individual Private Sector Leases for residential property for use as temporary accommodation, in consultation with the Head of Property & Regeneration, for a period of not more than 5 years from the date when the lease is entered into.**
- (3) Nominate and Authorise the Head of Housing and Community, in consultation with the Head of Property & Regeneration and Chief Finance Officer, to renew any lease entered into under the PSL scheme for a further period, of not more than 5 years from the date when the current lease period is due to end.**

40 RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE FUND

The Committee received a report presenting a proposal to establish a repair and maintenance fund to fund works to the residential properties owned by the Council for use as temporary accommodation.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **LAHF 3 fund properties.** The Strategic Housing Manager informed the Committee that the 5 properties which the Council hoped to purchase with Local Authority Housing Fund 3 monies would be covered by the Residential Property Repair and Maintenance Fund.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve the creation of a residential property repair and maintenance fund.**
- (2) Approve the repurposing of the remaining balance in the Residential Property Acquisition Fund of £150,000 to create the Property Repair and Maintenance Reserve.**
- (3) To nominate and authorise the Building Services and Facilities Manager, in consultation with the Housing Solutions Manager and finance to (i) approve the extent of works required and (ii) authorise the use of the Residential Property Repair and Maintenance Reserve to fund such works.**

41 POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW

The Committee received a report presenting a proposal to undertake a Polling District and Polling Place Review for Epsom and Ewell to facilitate anticipated changes from the Electoral Review of Surrey County Council by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

Following consideration, it was resolved:

- (1) Approve a Polling District and Polling Place Review and public consultation as set out in the report.**

42 URGENT DECISIONS

The Committee received a report informing it of the decisions taken by the Chief Executive and Directors on the grounds of urgency, in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Note the urgent decisions taken and the reasons for those decisions, since the last meeting of the committee.**

43 HOOK ROAD CAR PARK AND SGN SITE UPDATE

The Committee received a report recommending the procurement of specialist property regeneration, financial and legal advice to support the Council's future negotiations to facilitate the wider redevelopment of the Council's Hook Road Car Park and SGN Site.

The following matter was considered:

- a) **Timescales.** In response to a question from a member, the Head of Property and Regeneration informed the Committee that Zencap were not scheduled to take possession of the SGN site until September 2025.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve a budget of up to £150,000 to cover the initial costs of the appraisal and feasibility work, to be funded from the Corporate Projects Reserve;**
- (2) Note that the Director of Environment, Housing & Regeneration and Head of Property & Regeneration, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Legal Officer, have express authority to take all necessary actions further to the above decisions being made that commit resources, as is necessary and appropriate.**
- (3) Note a report will be brought back to Committee at the earliest opportunity following completion of the work.**

44 COMMERCIAL TENANT - TOWN HALL

The Committee received a report seeking authority to renew an existing commercial lease.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved:

- (1) Agree the lease renewal of the Police accommodation at the Town Hall upon the terms set out in paragraph 2 of the confidential Appendix 1 to the report.**
- (2) Nominate and authorise the Head of Property & Regeneration, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Legal Officer, to take all necessary actions further to the above decision being made that commit resources, as is necessary and appropriate, to progress the lease renewal to completion.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.39 pm

COUNCILLOR NEIL DALLEN (CHAIR)