

Minutes of the Meeting of the FINANCIAL STRATEGY ADVISORY GROUP held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 27 September 2024

PRESENT -

Councillor Neil Dallen (Chair); Councillors Hannah Dalton, Liz Frost, Alison Kelly and Clive Woodbridge

In Attendance: Councillor Alex Coley, Councillor Jan Mason and Councillor Steven McCormick

Absent: Councillor Peter O'Donovan

Officers present: Brendan Bradley (Chief Finance Officer) and Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant)

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by councillors regarding items on the agenda for the meeting.

7 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Financial Strategy Advisory Group meeting held on 12 July 2024 were agreed as a true record to be signed by the Chair.

8 TREASURY MANAGEMENT YEAR-END PERFORMANCE 2023/24

Following consideration of the report's contents, the Group moved to consider the report recommendations, which were agreed as follows:

(1) Receive the report on the Council's treasury management performance 2023/24;

(2) Receive the 2023/24 prudential indicators.

9 INITIAL CAPITAL PROPOSALS - 2025/26

It was agreed that a review of the capital criteria used to assess capital bids would be considered at the next meeting of the Group. It was also requested that the Council's Senior Surveyor attend the next meeting to answer any detailed questions that may arise about the schemes.

Members provided the following feedback on each proposal:

a) Environment 1 – Stew Ponds Removal of Silt

Proposal could progress to the next stage of the capital programme, but the final proposal must consider whether partial de-silting could be undertaken and the costs of this option. The detailed proposal should also cover the implications of not undertaking the work and whether there is an impact on the Climate Change Action Plan.

b) Environment 2 – Uppermill Pond Bank Replacement

Proposal to progress to the next stage of the capital programme.

c) Environment 3 – Ashley Centre Car Park Overcoating Waterproof Membrane

Proposal to proceed to the next stage, but the detailed proposal must include further detail on the risk of deferring the works. Also, to be included is a breakdown of the current state of and individual cost for each level, and whether just 1, 2 or all 3 levels could be undertaken. Clarification as to which level would leak into the shopping centre also to be detailed, as well as how much have relevant material prices increased over the last three years.

d) Environment 4 – Court Recreation Ground Renewal of 3G Football Pitch

Proposal to proceed to the next stage, but the detailed proposal must include current income levels and whether it could be positioned as a spend to save scheme by increasing fees/charges and/or the number of bookings. Information to be included regarding other 3G pitches in the area and any new ones in the pipeline to understand how this might impact future revenue streams. Health and Wellbeing benefits and Health & Safety concerns to be expanded upon in the detailed proposal.

e) Environment 5 – Playground Renovation and Surface Renewal

Proposal to progress to the next stage of the capital programme but should include a priority order and detail about the state/urgency of each park and related Health and Safety issues. Any playgrounds that have been successful in the recent CIL funding round at October LPPC Committee should be removed from the proposal.

f) Community & Wellbeing 1 – Playhouse Stage Lighting and Dimmers

Proposal to progress to the next stage of the capital programme but detailed proposal to clarify the estimated annual revenue savings from the new lights. The proposal should also include the Playhouse's annual

overall net operating cost to the Council, plus an estimate of additional associated car park income/usage that the Council receives.

g) Community & Wellbeing 2 – Playhouse Front of House Toilets

Proposal was not supported to progress to the next stage but a recommendation for a deep cleanse of the toilets was made instead.

h) Community & Wellbeing 3 – Bourne Hall Replacement of Windows – Phase 2

Proposal to progress to the next stage of the capital programme but clarification needed on the cost of doing this phase separately to the initial stage being undertaken in 2024/25. Detailed proposal to consider whether, if agreed, approval of the scheme at Full Council in February 2025 would allow sufficient time to coordinate with the first phase of works and realise any cost savings identified with doing the works concurrently.

Following consideration of the above matters and the report's contents, the Group moved to consider the report recommendations, which were agreed as follows:

- (1) Provide guidance on which of the initial schemes in the first draft 2025/26 capital programme should be developed for further consideration in November.**

The Chair thanked the Chief Finance Officer for his work for Epsom & Ewell in recognition of this being his last FSAG meeting before he leaves the Council.

The meeting began at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.29 pm

COUNCILLOR NEIL DALLEN (CHAIR)