

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 11 March 2025**

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### **PRESENT -**

Councillor Peter O'Donovan (Chair); Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Lucie McIntyre (as nominated substitute for Councillor Neil Dallen); Councillors Robert Leach, Rob Geleit, Julie Morris, Phil Neale, Kieran Persand, Humphrey Reynolds and Christine Howells (as nominated substitute for Councillor Shanice Goldman)

Absent: Councillor Neil Dallen and Councillor Shanice Goldman

Officers present: Ian Mawer (Planning Policy Manager), Michelle Meskell (Developer Contributions Lead Officer) and Phoebe Batchelor (Democratic Services Officer)

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### **38 APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY VICE CHAIR**

The Chair proposed Councillor Clive Woodbridge sit as Vice Chair for the Meeting, in Cllr Dallen's absence.

The Committee raised no objection and agreed for Councillor Woodbridge to sit as Vice Chair for the Meeting.

### **39 THANKS**

The Chair expressed thanks to the Officers for all their hard work in submitting the Local Plan.

The Chair thanked Committee Members for their time and effort throughout the Local Plan process.

### **40 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No questions or statements were received from Members of the Public.

### **41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or other registrable or non-registrable interests were made by Members with respect to any items to be considered at the meeting.

**42 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee confirmed as a true record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 23 January 2025 and authorised the Chair to sign them.

**43 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) SPENDING PROTOCOL 2025**

The Committee received a report seeking the approval of an updated CIL spending protocol, which will provide the framework for how the council allocates Community Infrastructure Levy funding that has been received from eligible developments in the borough to contribute towards the delivery of infrastructure.

The following matters were considered:

- a) **Urgent Decision.** A Member of the Committee asked for clarification as to why the urgent decision was taken, to amend the Terms of Reference for Licensing and Planning Policy Committee and Strategy and Resources Committee. The Planning Policy Manager informed the Committee that when the CIL spending protocol was first adopted, it was envisaged that any CIL bids over £50,000 would go to Strategy and Resources Committee to be approved, and any bids below that threshold would be approved by LPPC. The Planning Policy Manager explained that it became clear, following guidance from Finance, that it was the cumulative CIL spend that needed to be approved by S&R Committee, not just individual bids over £50,000. Therefore, the same report would go to Licensing and Planning Policy Committee and then also Strategy and Resources Committee for approval, delaying the release of CIL funding. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the collective view was that it would be more effective if the CIL Member Working Group reported directly to S&R Committee, and in order for that to happen, changes had to be made to the LPP and S&R Committees Terms of Reference in the Constitution. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the change needed to take place before the meeting of the LPP Committee and S&R Committee in March and could not wait for the next ordinary meeting of Full Council.
- b) **Flexibility.** A Member of the Committee expressed that there should be a degree of flexibility throughout the process and highlighted paragraph 2.10 which sets out that the document is intended as a framework, rather than a fixed set of rules.
- c) **Application Process.** A Member of the Committee asked for the CIL bidding process to be publicised and Communications to get involved in putting out the relevant information so everyone who wishes to submit application bids can within the timeframe set out. The Planning Policy Manager assured Members that the CIL bidding process and spending round will be promoted and publicised once the CIL spending protocol has been through LPP and S&R Committee.

- d) **Strategic Decisions.** A Member of the Committee asked if the Council will be taking any strategic decision about unallocated CIL before it no longer can. The Planning Policy Manager informed the Committee that some of that funding could be safeguarded to help deliver necessary infrastructure for the Local Plan. The Planning Policy Manager explained that no comment could be made regarding how CIL funding and spending will continue post Local Government Reorganisation as that is unknown at present.
- e) **Debt.** A Member of the Committee commented that the CIL funds could be put into a pot to pay off other Surrey Boroughs or Districts' debt following LGR. The Planning Policy Manager informed the Committee that the regulations are very clear as to what CIL can and can't be used for. Its purpose is to fund infrastructure, and it cannot be used to subsidised debt.
- f) **Spending.** A Member of the Committee asked if the Council is able to spend all CIL funds on projects to benefit residents in this spending cycle. The Chair explained that the CIL bidding process would be promoted as soon as possible, and encouraged all to submit applications bids to be considered so the Council can spend what it can.
- g) **Bid Success.** The Vice Chair suggested that a CIL workshop or briefing would be beneficial to allow all applicants to fully engage with and understand the application bidding process and give them the best chance of success.
- h) **Timetable.** The Vice Chair stated that once the Council knows what date a Section 24 notice is to be given, Members may want to bring forward or change dates on the CIL spending cycle timetable to allow CIL spending to be agreed and proceed. The Vice Chair agreed with earlier comments about emphasising the flexibility of the process and timescales given the context of LGR. A Member of the Committee suggested that the timetable was sped up as soon as possible rather than in response to a notice being given. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the CIL spending cycle process and timetable set out in the protocol worked well last year. The Planning Policy Manager explained that if a need was identified to bring a future spending round forward to take place before a deadline is imposed as part of reorganisation, it would be within the remit of the LPP Committee to amend the CIL spending protocol.
- i) **Local Plan.** A Member of the Committee asked when the Council could expect to receive a response regarding the recently submitted Local Plan. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the next step is to be assigned a Planning Inspector to examine our Local Plan and then the examination stage will commence. The Planning Policy Manager informed the Committee that it would typically take four months from submission to public hearings, but that could change, depending on the inspector's capacity. The Planning Policy Manager assured Members that they will be kept informed of any updates.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) Approve the updated Epsom and Ewell Borough CIL Spending Protocol 2025 attached at Appendix 1.**
- (2) Note that spending decisions will be taken to the Strategy and Resources Committee and that the CIL MWG will report to S&R Committee.**
- (3) Recommend to the Strategy and Resources Committee the MWG TOR in Appendix 1.**

*The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 7.55 pm*

COUNCILLOR PETER O'DONOVAN (CHAIR)