

Minutes of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 13 March 2025

PRESENT -

Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Chair); Councillor Bernice Froud (Vice-Chair); Councillors Rob Geleit, Graham Jones, Alison Kelly, Rachel King, Humphrey Reynolds and Kim Spickett

Officers present: Rod Brown (Head of Housing and Community), Rachel Epton (Community Development Manager), Arjan de Jong (Strategic Housing Manager), Lucy Buckland (Arts, Culture and Heritage Programme Officer), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant) and Dan Clackson (Democratic Services Officer)

27 QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions or statements from were received from members of the public.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy update

Councillor Rachel King, Other Interest: In the interest of openness and transparency, Councillor Rachel King declared that she runs a Girl Guides group which had been involved in the Community Murals painting project.

29 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee confirmed as a true record the restricted minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 October 2024 and the minutes and restricted minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2025, and authorised the Chair to sign them.

30 HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2025-2028

The Committee received a report setting out the Council's intended health and wellbeing strategy for 2025-2028.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Children's Engagement in Daily Activity.** A Member enquired as to whether the statistic stating that over 50% of children do not take part in the recommended minimum of an hour's physical activity per day was in

respect of time outside of school, i.e. evenings and weekends, or time including school hours. The Community Development Manager stated she understood that the statistic was in respect of time including school hours.

- b) **Partnerships.** The Committee considered the importance of building relationships with organisations such as the Integrated Care Partnership and Epsom Primary Care Network as the Council moved towards becoming part of a future unitary authority.
- c) **Wording Amendment.** The Committee considered that the sentence towards the end of the strategy, 'We shall also, in line with our responsibilities to our veterans...', could be reworded to replace 'veterans' with 'Armed Forces community'.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Approve the draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2028 as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.**
- (2) **Agree to the draft Strategy being taken to Public Consultation for a period of 6-weeks after the Committee meeting.**

31 HOMELESSNESS: EXPENDITURE AND ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Committee received a report setting out the actions taken to minimise homelessness expenditure and identifying the funding to be utilised to cover the additional expenditure for 2024/25.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Effect of Local Government Reorganisation on Nightly Paid Accommodation.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager suggested that the process for housing people in nightly paid accommodation would likely remain unchanged following the formation of the Surrey unitary authorities. He explained that when selecting accommodation for people, there are requirements in place to ensure that accommodation is suitable, taking into consideration matters such as the standard of the accommodation and also the location.
- b) **Competition for Nightly Paid Accommodation.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager stated that Epsom & Ewell experiences competition for nightly paid accommodation due in part to its close proximity to nearby London boroughs. He stated that placing people in accommodation further out into Surrey can be challenging due to unavailability of accommodation and also because it can cause people to become separated from their support networks.
- c) **Modular Homes at Fairview Road.** In response to a question from a Member, the Chair stated that the Fairview Road modular homes scheme was progressing well, and it was anticipated that the accommodation units would be in place for Autumn.

- d) **Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) Allocation Consultation.** In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Housing Manager stated that the HPG allocation formula included in MHCLG's consultation was anticipated to be beneficial for Epsom & Ewell, though suggested it might take c.6 months before an exact figure is known for how much the Council will receive.
- e) **MHCLG Additional Grant Funding 2025/26.** A Member enquired as to how the additional funding received from MHCLG could be utilised to alleviate homelessness in the Borough. The Strategic Housing Manager stated that typically a large part of the Homelessness Prevention Grant goes towards accommodation. He stated that more preventative measures were also being explored, with the possibility of taking on additional staff within the housing team, funded by the increased grant, being investigated.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the priority action points which have been taken to manage homelessness over the past 6 months.**
- (2) **Note the use of Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) and Homelessness Grant reserves to cover the increase in expenditure, during 2024/25, to enable the Council to meet its duties under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.**
- (3) **Agree that a further update regarding nightly paid accommodation (NPA) expenditure be provided at the Community & Wellbeing Committee in October 2025.**

32 ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Committee received a report setting out achievements of work delivered as part of the Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy between 2023 – 2025, and setting out a proposal of relevant funding streams and attributed work to support in the delivery of the Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy for 2025/26.

The Committee considered the following matters:

- a) **Epsom Playhouse.** The Committee considered the significance of the Playhouse as a cultural hub within the Borough and noted the recent arts, culture and heritage projects completed there, such as the mural paintings and the Evelyn Dove display, with further works planned for the future.
- b) **Link Between Arts, Culture & Heritage (AC&H), and Health & Wellbeing.** In response to a question from a Member, the Arts, Culture and Heritage Programme Officer stated that becoming part of the Community Development team had increased the opportunities for AC&H projects by enabling exploration of the health and wellbeing aspects of

AC&H, and had allowed the AC&H strategy to be more effectively synergised with the Health and Wellbeing strategy. The Committee considered the health benefits that art, culture and creativity can bring to people.

- c) **Musical Sculptures.** In response to a question from a Member, the Arts, Culture and Heritage Programme Officer explained that 10 musical sculptures were planned for installation in 3 of the Borough's parks. She explained that they would be acoustic sculptures, shaped as vibrantly coloured flowers, which emit a musical sound when their petals are knocked, providing a visual, sound and touch-based experience for park visitors.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Note the achievements of works delivered as part of the Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy.**
- (2) **Note the proposal of relevant funding streams and attributed work to support in the delivery of the Council's Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy for 2025/26.**

33 FEES AND CHARGES UPDATE REPORT

The Committee received a report recommending an additional fee for which the Committee is responsible and correcting the charge on a previously agreed fee, with both fees to be effective from 1 April 2025.

The report was published after the agenda publication date further to the Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee being of the opinion that it should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency – in order that a decision be made by Committee prior to 1st April 2025 – in accordance with Appendix 5, CPR 3.7 of the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Constitution, and s.100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Following consideration, the Committee unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Agree the additional fee for hourly rates for standard room hire at Bourne Hall for 17:00 – 24:00, as set out at section 3.1 of the report.**
- (2) **Agree an updated fee for hourly rates for standard room hire at Bourne Hall for 09:00 – 17:00, as set out at section 3.2 of the report.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.01 pm

COUNCILLOR CLIVE WOODBRIDGE (CHAIR)