

## **Minutes of Cabinet**

**4 December 2019**

### **Present:**

Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, Leader and Council Policy co-ordination  
Councillor A.C. Harman, Deputy Leader and Finance  
Councillor M.M. Attewell, Community Wellbeing and Housing  
Councillor R.O. Barratt, Environment and Compliance  
Councillor J.R. Boughtflower, Corporate Management  
Councillor O. Rybinski, Economic Development, Customer Service, Estates  
and Transport

**Apologies:** Councillor I.J. Beardsmore, Strategic Planning – Local Plan

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Councillor C. Bateson

### **2656 Minutes**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 6 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

### **2657 Disclosures of Interest**

There were none.

### **2658 Recommendation of the Audit Committee on Corporate Risk Management**

Cabinet considered the recommendation from the Audit Committee on the Corporate Risk Register.

**Resolved** to approve the Corporate Register as submitted.

### **Reason for the decision:**

The Register summarises the Council's most significant risks. It sets out the controls which have been put in place and identifies any further action which might be needed to mitigate risks.

### **2659 Outline Budget 2020/21 to 2023/24 - Key Decision**

Cabinet considered a report on the Outline Budget for 2020/21 to 2023/24 which outlined the current expected budget gaps for 2020/21 and the following three years.

The Chief Finance Officer advised Cabinet that there would be an impact on the detailed budget arising from the Pension fund review which requires a significant increase to employer contributions. This had not previously been flagged as anticipated by the actuaries or pension fund administrators when

the Outline Budget was considered and the reasons for the proposed increase and options for managing impact on the Budget were being explored with actuaries.

Cabinet asked to receive a further report at its next meeting giving more information on the impact to the budget as a result of the Pension fund review.

**Resolved** to receive a further report on the Outline Budget for 2020/21 to 2023/24 addressing the impact arising from the Pension fund review, at the next meeting of Cabinet on 29 January 2020.

**Reason for Decision**

Cabinet needs to fully understand the implications for the Outline Budget as a result of the Pension fund review before it can agree the recommendations in the report.

**2660 Capital Monitoring Report**

Cabinet considered a report on the current level of capital spend covering the period April to September 2019.

**Resolved** to note the current level of capital spend.

**2661 Revenue Monitoring Report**

Cabinet considered a report on the current level of revenue spend covering the period April to September 2019.

**Resolved** to note the current level of revenue spend.

**2662 Calendar of Meetings**

Cabinet considered a report on the Calendar of meetings for 2020-21.

The meetings for 2020 to 2021 had been programmed to ensure that the Council makes decisions in a timely way to help with the implementation of its priorities and strategies, as well as fulfilling its constitutional and legal obligations.

**Resolved to recommend Council** to approve the Calendar of meetings 2020-21.

**2663 Leader's announcements**

The following are the latest service updates from various Council departments.

The Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation for the Borough has now been open for 4 weeks.

The Council has extended its public consultation on a new Local Plan for the Borough, which sets out proposals for where housing, employment and other

development will be built up to 2035. The original consultation period already exceeded the statutory minimum 6 weeks to take account of the Christmas break. However, the General Election wasn't originally expected and therefore we've again extended the period within which local residents can respond.

The consultation will now run until Tuesday 21 January 2020 and gives another two weeks for residents to give their views on the proposed allocations and policies.

Four public events have been held to provide further information to residents and interested parties and a further three events are planned in December and if needed in the New Year to ensure everyone is fully informed and can have their say.

The Council met with senior officials from the Ministry of Homes, Communities and Local Government to express the deep concerns over the very high housing figure calculated for the Borough using the Government's standard method for calculating 'need'. Using this method, the figure for Spelthorne is 603 homes per year. Like many local authorities in Surrey, it is incredibly challenging to find sites to meet that need. Spelthorne is 65% Green Belt and 17% is water. In fact, 26% of our Green Belt is made up of the reservoirs. The Council will continue to push the Government to bring this figure down so we can deliver a Local Housing Plan that is acceptable to our communities.

On Monday 11 November a Remembrance Ceremony was held here at the Council Offices and we were joined by veteran Bill Sykes who helped plant a Red Oak tree outside the Council offices on the Green in readiness for the commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day on 8 May 2020.

Spelthorne in Bloom celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> year on 4 November, where winners were presented with their awards at Shepperton Studios. There were so many beautiful and imaginative entries this year. Thank you to the volunteers and gardeners for all their hard work ensuring another successful year and congratulations to the finalists and winners.

The hard work and sporting achievements of local players, coaches and volunteers was celebrated at the annual Spelthorne Sports Awards at Shepperton Studios on Tuesday 19 November. The winners, and everyone nominated for these awards, are a credit to Spelthorne and to sport. Thanks to everyone who helped to organise the event and many congratulations to everyone who received an award.

The Council has announced that it will be offering Council Tax exemptions from April 2020 to young people leaving care aged between 18 and 25. Care leavers have often had their childhoods affected by instability and trauma.

After much public support, the Council is pleased to share the news that the 'silent soldier', which was vandalised last month has now been repaired and put back in its rightful place in Memorial Gardens, Staines-upon-Thames.

The Council has produced a written response and local impact report for the Southampton to London Pipeline Project. The proposed pipeline will pass through the Borough and while we understand the national need for the infrastructure project, our primary objective must be to ensure that sufficient protection is provided for our community and environment. The Council is looking for Esso to engage with us and our residents constructively, to put in place the specific protections we seek.

Spelthorne Borough Council has launched a public consultation on the draft framework for our new Homelessness Strategy, which will address homelessness and rough sleeping in Spelthorne for 2020 to 2025. The consultation opened Monday 2 December and runs up to midday Monday 6 January. The overall aims of the strategy are to ensure nobody sleeps rough in Spelthorne, ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, reducing the length of time people stay in temporary accommodation, increasing the use of the private sector for homelessness prevention and investing in staff training and development to improve the Housing Options service.

This week the winter edition of The Bulletin has been delivered with articles on tackling rough sleeping, festive recycling and local seasonal events. This Bulletin is a special edition which includes an 8 page Local Plan Consultation insert informing residents on why we need a new Local Plan and a map for each area across the Borough showing proposed site allocations. Christmas in Stanwell is back on Friday 6 December with the annual Christmas light switch-on and lantern parade. Everyone is welcome to join us for a mince pie or two!

As Leader of Spelthorne Borough Council, I attended a Council meeting at Grand Port Mauritius on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November to formally mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Twinning Charter. The visit was entirely self-funded and reflects my personal desire to reaffirm the decade long twinning. Taking time out from his annual vacation visiting family on the island, the Chief Executive - in his own time and at his own expense - also joined me on 15<sup>th</sup> November to mark this occasion. We both participated in a working session in the Grand Port Council Chamber with District Councillors and Heads of Department. The Chairman and Chief Executive of Grand Port then publicly reaffirmed the relationship between the two boroughs in signing a 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Charter declaration which will be displayed in our public vestibule outside the Council Chamber. The Chairman and Chief Executive of Grand Port will be visiting Spelthorne early in 2020.

#### **2664      Urgent Action**

Cabinet noted the urgent action taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader on 9 November 2019, to agree one letting within the fourth floor of the Thames Tower, Reading. The matter, which was not a Key Decision, was considered as urgent action because the proposed tenant required completion of the letting before the Cabinet was next due to meet.

**2665 Urgent items**

There were none.

**2666 Exempt Business**

**Resolved** to move the exclusion of the Press and Public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

**2667 Exempt report - Investment acquisition Y - Key decision**

*Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)*

Cabinet considered an exempt report on an opportunity to acquire an asset for affordable housing to provide 43 apartments with 27 parking spaces.

The Group Head for Regeneration and Growth gave a presentation on the proposal setting out the rationale for acquisition, the costs involved and the due diligence process.

Cabinet expressed concern that liability for external building maintenance, including a contribution towards grounds maintenance, rested with the leaseholder and asked for further clarity on the scope to change this position, before it agreed to proceed with the acquisition.

Alternative options considered and rejected by the Cabinet:

- Not to proceed with the acquisition.

**Resolved to delegate** the decision to proceed with the acquisition and approve the following recommendations, to the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, subject to clarity as to the estate service charge:

1. Approve the funding of Knowle Green Estates Limited (KGE) to facilitate the acquisition of the 999 years long leasehold interest in the affordable housing asset identified in this report;
2. Formally approve the terms agreed, and authorise the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Finance) to agree any further additional terms as funder to enable KGE to proceed with their acquisition of the asset;
3. Authorise the Chief Finance Officer to decide the most financially advantageous funding arrangements for the purchase, and overall to ensure the funding for the acquisition is prudentially affordable; and
4. Authorise the Head of Corporate Governance to enter into any legal documentation necessary to fund the acquisition of the asset including the completion of the associated loan agreement with KGE.

### **Reasons for Decision**

Approving this funding will enable the provision of 43 new apartments for affordable rent with 27 car spaces. The scheme is anticipated to be completed in Spring 2022 and is in line with Spelthorne's strategy to significantly increase the supply of affordable homes within the Borough. The scheme will also support the Council to continue with its strategy to reduce the number of households in emergency and temporary accommodation.

### **NOTES:-**

- (1) *Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are reminded that under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16, the "call-in" procedure shall not apply to recommendations the Cabinet makes to the Council. The matters on which recommendations have been made to the Council, if any, are identified with an asterisk [\*] in the above Minutes.***
- (2) *Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are entitled to call in decisions taken by the Cabinet for scrutiny before they are implemented, other than any recommendations covered under (1) above.***
- (3) *Within five working days of the date on which a decision of the Cabinet or a Cabinet Member is published, not less than three members [one of whom must be the Chairman] of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are able to "call in" a decision;***
- (4) *To avoid delay in considering an item "called in", an extraordinary meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be convened within seven days of a "call in" being received if an ordinary meeting is not scheduled in that period;***
- (5) *When calling in a Cabinet decision for review the members doing so should in their notice of "call in":-***
  - Outline their reasons for requiring a review;***
  - Indicate any further information they consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to have before it in order to conduct a review in addition to the written report made by officers to the Cabinet;***
  - Indicate whether, where the decision was taken collectively by the Cabinet, they wish the Leader or his nominee (who should normally be the Cabinet Member) or where the decision was taken by a Cabinet Member, the member of the Cabinet making the decision, to attend the committee meeting; and***

- ***Indicate whether the officer making the report to the Cabinet or the Cabinet Member taking the decision or his/her representative should attend the meeting.***
- (6) ***The deadline of five working days for "call in" by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the above decisions by the Cabinet is the close of business on 13 December 2019.***