

**Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
16 October 2023**

Present:

Councillor J.R. Sexton (Chair)
Councillor C. Bateson (Vice-Chair)

Councillors:

M. Beecher	M. Gibson	O. Rybinski
J.R. Boughtflower	K.M. Grant	K. Rutherford
J. Button	K. Howkins	H.R.D. Williams
J.T.F. Doran	M. Lee	
S.M. Doran	L. E. Nichols	

105/23 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Attewell.

106/23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2023 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

107/23 Disclosures of Interest

Councillor Sexton advised that she was also a Surrey County Councillor.

108/23 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

**109/23 Environmental Health & Building Control Enforcement Policy
2023/2026**

The Committee considered a report from the Senior Environmental Health Manager that sought approval for adoption of the Environmental Health & Building Control Enforcement Policy 2023-26.

The Committee were advised that this policy would ensure that all companies were compliant and that no company was disadvantaged due to safeguards being put in place.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Adopt the Environmental Health & Building Control Enforcement Policy (2023-2026),
2. Approve that minor changes can be made to the Policy with the approval of the Deputy Chief Executive with responsibility for Place, Protection and Prosperity; and
3. Note Spelthorne Borough Council's Environmental Health 'Procedure for Setting Financial Penalties – Banding the Offence and Determining Appropriate Sanctions'.

110/23 Development Delivery Options for Council Owned Development Sites

The Committee considered a report from the Group Head of Assets that sought approval for the Development Sub-Committee to consider all the possible workstreams for all Council owned sites.

The Development Sub-Committee will consider and make recommendations that will be brought to this Committee before going to Council for final decisions to be made.

The Committee expressed that they felt the information contained within the report for this item and the other financial reports within the agenda was confusing and inconsistent. It was requested that in future, the Finance Team and the Assets Team liaise to produce one report that is consistent in the information provided and provides cross-referencing for ease when considering each site.

It was agreed that the Member Financial Reporting Working Group will, as part of its ongoing work, look at how reports were written and presented to ensure that all councillors are able to understand the current financial position and also the financial implications of any decision made. It was agreed that Councillor Gibson would join this working group.

The Group Head of Assets confirmed that the public will be consulted before any decisions were made with regard to the individual sites but when and how this would be done would be for councillors to decide.

The Committee **resolved** to approve that:

The Development Sub-Committee, with support from officers:

1. Progress a comprehensive mixed use, phased masterplan strategy for Council owned site in Staines,

2. Identify suitable development delivery options for Council owned sites, in other parts of the Borough and not included as part of a comprehensive Staines masterplan or subject to early disposal to mitigate high holding costs,
3. Identify and progress options for mitigating holding costs via:
 - a) Early disposal of sites, which have high monthly holding costs and are not suitable for inclusion in a comprehensive masterplan for Staines-upon-Thames,
 - b) Work to obtain fixed costs for the demolition of Thameside House to offset high holding costs,
 - c) Temporary lettings for those sites which will continue to remain in the Council's ownership in the medium to long term; and
 - d) Delegate authority to the Development Sub-Committee to agree the terms and completion of lettings where these are not covered under the Officer Scheme of Delegation.

111/23 Update on County Deal

This item was deferred to the meeting of this committee on 27 November 2023.

112/23 Updated Capital Programme

The Committee considered an addendum to the 2023-24 to 2026-27 Capital Programme for Suspension of the Direct Housing Projects from The Chief Accountant.

Officers were instructed by the Committee to ensure that no more capital projects be undertaken without the agreement of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee and Council.

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council that it approves the proposed revised Capital Programme for 2023-24 to 2026-27 as set out in Appendix B of the report.

113/23 Updated Treasury Management Strategy

The Committee considered an addendum to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023-24 from The Chief Accountant.

The Committee **resolved** to make the following recommendations to Council:

1. Reduce the Authorisation Limit from £1,450m to £1,167m,
2. Reduce the Operational Boundary from £1,350m to £1,067m; and

3. That they note the updates to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2023-24 as set out in the report.

114/23 2023/24 Q1 Capital Monitoring

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Accountant that outlined the projected (£3.4m) underspend on the Council's Capital Projects as at 30 June 2023.

The Committee **resolved** to note the report.

115/23 2023/24 Q1 Revenue Monitoring

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Accountant that asked them to:

1. Note the forecast underspend of (£182,081) for 2023-24 as at 30 June 2023; and
2. Approve the timing difference budget virement between landlord costs and the sinking fund which will be reversed in 2024-25.

The **Committee** resolved to note recommendation No. 1 and approve recommendation No. 2.

116/23 Cost of Living Support Fund

The Committee considered a report from the Group Head Community Wellbeing & the Strategic Lead, Independent Living.

The Committee were advised that the Council had allocated £200,000 to assist residents through the cost-of-living crisis. £9,000 of this fund had previously been allocated to help families with children that had a life limiting condition, leaving £191,000 still to be allocated.

This report had previously been considered at the Community Wellbeing & Housing Committee on 26 September 2023 and they recommended that Option 2 in the report be adopted to provide the most appropriate and proportionate distribution of these funds.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note the amount of funds available for the Cost of Living Support Fund,
2. Approve the recommendation from the Community Wellbeing & Housing Committee to use the Spelthorne Healthy Communities Partnership Board to allocate the remaining money; and

3. Approve the proposed governance applied to this fund.

117/23 Forward Plan

The Committee **resolved** to note the Forward Plan for the business of this committee.

118/23 Urgent Actions

There were none.

119/23 Exclusion of Public & Press (Exempt Business)

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson, seconded by Councillor Nichols and resolved that the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) because it was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because, disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in being able to undertake even-handed negotiations and finalising acceptable contract terms.

120/23 Staffing Report - Independent Living

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Lead, Independent Living that sought approval of a proposed staffing issue.

The Committee **resolved** to agree the recommendations as outlined in the exempt report.

121/23 Procurement of Leisure Centre Operator

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson and seconded by Councillor Gibson that Standing Order 38.2 be suspended to allow the continuation of the meeting behind the 3 hours.

Committee **resolved** to suspend Standing Order 38.2 to deal with the remaining items on the agenda.

The Committee considered a report from The Leisure Development Manager that sought to outline the process used to identify the preferred operator and to approve the report being brought before Council on 19 October 2023 for a final decision to be made.

The Committee asked that once the preferred operator had been confirmed they be invited in to speak to the Committee.

Concerns were raised about how the Council would ensure that the Operator would be monitored to ensure that the Passivhaus accreditation was not rescinded. The Committee was advised that this was an accreditation for the life-span of the Leisure Centre.

The Committee was advised that there would be a number of different memberships available for the public.

Concerns were raised by the Committee about the freelance instructors that were used by the current operator and whether they would continue to be used. The Committee were advised that it would be the preferred bidder's decision as to whether the freelance instructors will continue to be used and what classes they would provide.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note the full evaluation process to identify the preferred Operator (Bidder B) as the preferred Leisure Centre Operator,
2. Approve the report going onto Council on 19 October 2023 who will then be asked to:
 - a) Approve the Council entering into a management agreement (subject to the required standstill period) with Bidder B to manage Sunbury Leisure Centre and the new Spelthorne Leisure Centre on behalf of the Council for a period of 10 years from the opening of the new centre and with the option (at the sole discretion of the Council and subject to satisfactory performance) to extend the contract for a further period of 5 years; and
 - b) Authorise the Group Head of Assets to agree terms in respect of any necessary leasehold arrangements with the Preferred Bidder in respect of the new Spelthorne Leisure Centre and Sunbury Leisure Centre and to authorise the Group Head Corporate Governance to enter into a contract with the Preferred Bidder.

122/23 Consultant Review

The Committee considered a report from the Group Head Commissioning and Transformation and Human Resources on the use of contractors within Spelthorne Borough Council.

Following the consideration of the Establishment Review Report at a meeting of the Committee on 17 July 2023, officers were asked to provide full details of contractors currently employed by the Council.

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the review of Consultants within Spelthorne Borough Council

123/23 Corporate Policy & Resources Chair's Updates

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the Capital and Reserves Strategy Report had been pulled from the agenda. This was because officers needed to receive instructions from the councillors with regard to their wishes for the Council owned development sites, before any tangible financial figures could be relayed to them.

It was anticipated that a report would be brought to this Committee in the next few months to be considered and then be taken to Council.