

**Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
27 November 2023**

Present:

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

Councillors:

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

Substitutions: Councillors S.A. Dunn

Apologies: Councillors M. Gibson

124/23 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Gibson and Cllr Dunn was present as her substitute.

125/23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2023 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

126/23 Disclosures of Interest

Councillor Nichols declared an interest in Item 5, Knowle Green Estates Ltd in that he was the Council's representative on the Knowle Green Estates Board.

Councillors Attewell and Sexton declared that they were also Surrey County Councillors.

127/23 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

128/23 Knowle Green Estates - Board Directors Presentation

The Committee received a presentation from the 4 Board Directors of Knowle Green Estates (KGE), Darren Levy, Anne Fillis, Councillor Nichols and Terry Collier that sought to update members on the workings of KGE and the current financial position.

The Committee asked for the actual rent arrears figure to be provided. The Board Directors advised the Committee that a full time Sustainability Officer had been recruited to assist tenants that had difficulties with paying their rent/utility bills. This would include assisting them with a range of support measures available or signposting them to the relevant agency.

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

129/23 Management of Staines Market

The Committee considered a report from the Group Head Neighbourhood Services and the Service Monitor that sought approval to commence a tender exercise for the procurement of the Management of Staines Market.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to commence a tender exercise for the procurement of the management of Staines Market for a period of 3+1+1 years,
2. Delegate the selection of the Contractor to the Group Head Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Chair of Corporate Policy & Resources Committee,
3. Authorise the Group Head Corporate Governance to enter the contract with the selected supplier.
4. Authorise an increased annual budget to cover additional contractual costs of the market provision; and
5. Delegate authority to the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to authorise charging of ad-hoc market rents.

130/23 Procurement of Cleaning services for the Council's municipal portfolio and the residential properties

The Committee considered a report from the Facilities Manager that sought approval for the procurement process for the letting of a contract for cleaning services to the Council's municipal and residential properties.

Concerns were expressed about the continuing use of an outside company for the cleaning contract when some felt it would be better to bring the service back in-house. The Group Head Assets advised that going out to tender would ensure that the successful bidder would have to maintain an agreed level of service regardless of sickness or annual leave.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Approve the procurement process for the letting of a contract for cleaning services to the Council's municipal and residential properties,
2. Agree a contract commencement date of 01 April 2024 for an initial term of 3 years, with the option to extend annually for a further 2 12-month periods, at the Council's sole discretion, taking into account the Contractor's performance on the contract,
3. Delegate the appointment of the Contractor to the Group Head Assets in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee;
4. Authorise the Group Head Corporate Governance to enter into a legal documentation necessary to implement the new contract.

131/23 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Policy

The Committee considered a report from the Monitoring Officer that sought approval to adopt the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Policy (RIPA Policy).

The Committee asked for the number of cases in the past 4 years that have fallen under this Act. The Group Head Corporate Governance advised that these figures would be presented to the Audit Committee.

The Committee **resolved** to adopt the RIPA Policy and delegate to the Group Head Corporate Governance to keep the Policy under regular review and update the Audit Committee on any updates to the Policy and use of the power thereunder.

132/23 Determination of 2024/25 Council Tax Base for Tax Setting

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Accountant that sought a recommendation for Council to agree the gross and net Council Tax Base for 2024/25.

The Committee were advised that this recommendation was in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council that:

1. The gross Council Tax Base for 2024/25 is determined at 41,305 (2023/24: 40,867) as Band D equivalents after taking account of the Council's agreed Council Tax Support Scheme; and
2. The net Council Tax Base for 2024/25 calculated as Band D equivalents, is determined at 39,241 (2023/24: 39,233) after adjustment by 5% to allow for irrecoverable amounts, appeals and property base changes.

133/23 Treasury Management Half-Yearly Report

The Committee considered a report from the Treasury Management and Capita Accountant that sought to outline the Treasury Management activity for the six months to September 2023.

The Committee **resolved** to note the performance of the Treasury Department during the first six months of 2023/24.

134/23 2024-25 to 2027-28 Outline Budget Report

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Accountant.

Members were advised that following a recommendation from the Members Financial Reporting Group, this report was piloting the use of the new '4 block reporting system'.

The Chief Finance Officer advised that Committee that it would be prudent to take a medium term approach to the Council's finances and that identified savings would be tracked to ensure that they are were in line with what was planned.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Note the current projected draft Budget gaps as set out in 1.80-1.81 of the report,
2. To recommend to Council that it explores the range of options over the four year period set out in the report, to close the budget gaps including seeking to maximise transformation savings, including digital transformation, smarter use of physical assets, delivering cashable savings, prioritisation and collaborative savings and in the last instance use it reserves to deliver a balanced budget for 2024/25 and note that

there is some headroom to protect front line services and vulnerable residents, either in 2024/25 or future years; and

3. To confirm support for the initiatives suggested in the report which will allow Officers to work on closing the gaps for the years 2024-24 to 2027-28.

135/23 Surrey County Deal

The Committee received an update on the County Deal from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive that sought agreement of the Position Statement produced in response to the recent announcement that Surrey County Council have been asked to engage in discussions with Central Government on a Level 2 County Deal.

The Committee **resolved** to agree the Position Statement.

136/23 Corporate Plan

The Committee considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive and the Head of Communications and Customer Experience that sought a recommendation to Council that it adopts the proposed Outline Corporate Plan for 2024-28 which specifies the priorities, key themes and values for the Council for the next five years.

The Leader made the following statement:

“I have great pleasure in introducing this report on our proposed Outline Corporate Plan for 2024-28. The Corporate Plan is a key policy document which outlines the proposed strategic priorities and values for the Council.

Following the local government elections in May this year, 22 new Councillors were elected to this Council and since that time the administration Group Leaders have been working collaboratively to discuss and formulate a refreshed set of priorities and values based around the previous CARES and PROVIDE acronyms.

I know you will have read the published papers and have had time to digest the presentation and outline plan. We have been working with officers to develop these ideas you have before you, which specifies our key themes for the Council for the next five years.

There are budgetary challenges ahead and we recognise that we still have to be responsible in setting our aspirations for the future of our Borough. However, and in line with our new Residents' Pledge, we are confident that this proposed plan puts our residents at the heart of everything we do.

The proposed updated priorities are:

- **Community**
- **Addressing housing need**
- **Resilience**
- **Environment**
- **Services**

The previous 'Affordable Housing' priority has been amended to 'Addressing Housing Need' reflecting our new approach to housing delivery, how we can work with partners and how we can best support residents to live independently in their own homes.

The 'Recovery' priority has been changed to 'Resilience' and incorporates the final resilience of the Council, the economic resilience of the Borough and ensuring our preparedness for the effects of climate change.

Finally 'Service Delivery' has been amended to 'Services' with an emphasis on community focused and accessible services.

The Outline Plan also proposes an amended set of values, which will underpin our decisions, interactions and behaviours, externally for residents and internally with each other, both Councillors and Officers.

Two changes have been made; the previous 'Empowering Communities' value has been amended to 'Empowering and Inclusive' and 'Responsive and Flexible' has been amended to 'Responsive and Respectful'.

If agreed by Committee tonight, this Outline Plan will be presented to Council on 14 December 2023. If adopted by Council, the Outline Plan will formulate the Detailed Plan in parallel with the budget setting process and this will then be recommended for adoption at the February 2024 Council. Annually we will measure and review the objectives and progress of the Corporate Plan and report it as part of the Annual Report.

I believe that there has never been a greater need for strong local government. This new Plan will demonstrate how this democratic and inclusive Council can deliver and advocate for the services and resources that our communities need for a stronger, healthier and safer Borough".

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council that the proposed Outline Corporate Plan for 2024-28 be adopted.

137/23 Asset Management Strategy & Asset Management Plan

The Committee considered a report from the Principal Asset Manager and Group Head Assets that sought:

1. A recommendation to Council to adopt the Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan; and
2. A recommendation to the Committee System Working Group to include, as part of the Committee Structure Review, the establishment of a new Sub-Committee with 4/5 members including an independent external advisor.

The Committee **resolved** to make the 2 recommendations as outlined in the report.

138/23 Forward Plan

The Committee queried why they had not been presented with an Assets Service Plan for consideration. The Group Head of Assets advised that she would present it at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee **resolved** to agree the contents of the Forward Plan for this Committee.

139/23 Urgent Actions

There was no urgent actions.

140/23 Exclusion of Public & Press (Exempt Business)

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson, seconded by Councillor Beecher 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.

141/23 Progression of the Waterfront Development

The Committee considered an exempt report on the progression of the Waterfront Development.

The Committee approved the recommendations as outlined in the report.

142/23 Corporate Policy & Resources Chair's Updates

The Leader addressed the Committee on the proposed Design Code:

