

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
15 January 2019**

Present:

Councillor S.C. Mooney (Chairman)
Councillor J.G. Kavanagh (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

S. Capes	V.J. Leighton	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
R. Chandler	D. Saliagopoulos	B.B. Spoor
A.E. Friday	A. Sapunovas	
A.T. Jones	J.R. Sexton	

Apologies: Councillors A.L. Griffiths

10/19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2018 were approved as a correct record.

11/19 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest from members of the Committee in relation to any item on the agenda.

Councillor D. Saliagopoulos requested assurance from the Chairman that she had no interest to declare in relation to the exempt Capital Strategy report at Item 14 of the agenda, due to her role on Surrey County Council's Cabinet. She further moved a motion of no confidence in the Chairman which was seconded by Councillor J. Sexton.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the requirement to disclose interests of a pecuniary or non-pecuniary nature or a conflict of interest, was a personal responsibility upon each councillor. He outlined the nature of each type of interest and confirmed that a position on the Cabinet of Surrey County Council did not fall into any category of interest in relation to any item on the agenda.

The Monitoring Officer advised the Committee that as a vote of no confidence in the Chairman was not an item on the agenda before them, or related to any disclosure of interest, that they did not need to consider it.

At a request from Councillor Saliagopoulos for clarity on Councillor Mooney's interests due to her roles on Surrey County Council and Spelthorne Borough Council, the Monitoring Officer agreed to confirm in writing the requirements relating to disclosures of interests as detailed in the Constitution.

12/19 Call-in of Cabinet decisions

No decisions of Cabinet had been called-in.

13/19 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan was noted.

14/19 Task Groups

The Chairman recalled the training session that the Committee had received last September which included the role of task groups. She invited the Committee to consider whether there were any suitable items on its work programme which would benefit from this approach.

Councillor D. Saliagopoulos asked the Chairman to confirm that she had updated her Register of interests in relation to her position as a Surrey County Councillor.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the only legal requirement to update the Register was following a declaration of a pecuniary interest at a meeting in relation to an item on that agenda. Although members are encouraged to update their other interests as necessary, there is no ongoing obligation to keep the Register updated.

The Monitoring Officer offered to talk further to members about the procedure for declarations of interests outside this meeting as this topic was not part of the agenda business or related to any item on the agenda.

Members considered whether there was scope for a Task Group to review the Council's property acquisitions before any purchase was completed. The Chairman advised the Committee that she had asked officers to report at the March meeting on commercial acquisitions and associated risks. This would be a more practical way to look at the matter rather than an ongoing process of reviewing each individual acquisition. The Committee agreed to the addition of this item on the work programme for March 2019.

The Committee agreed that it would be more useful to consider topics which could be reviewed by a task group at the start of the next municipal year.

As a result of feedback to the Leisure Centre consultation from residents, the Chairman proposed that a task group be set up to consider the topic of consultation with residents. She would discuss this further with officers and report back to the next meeting.

Resolved:

1. To add an item on commercial acquisitions and associated risks to the Committee's work programme for its March 2019 meeting;
2. To consider suitable topics to be reviewed by a task group at the first meeting of the next municipal year; and

3. To receive an update from the Chairman at the next meeting on the proposal for a task group to look at consultations with residents.

15/19 Treasury Management Strategy - half yearly report

The Deputy Chief Accountant presented the half-yearly report for Treasury Management.

She detailed the headline figures at the end of September 2018: borrowing totalled £1,033m, of which £1,008m was loans from the PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) and £25m from local authorities. The Council's investment portfolio totalled £68.8m. This included pooled investment funds of £17.5m with an average income return of 4.46%.

Resolved to note the Treasury Management half-yearly report 2018/19.

16/19 Heathrow and southern light railway

The Group Head for Regeneration and Growth gave a presentation on Heathrow expansion and Southern Light Railway (attached to these minutes).

The Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey advised members that the Council was continuing to engage robustly with Heathrow to secure the best balance in terms of the economic benefits versus the impact of expansion, for the Borough's residents.

Members of the Committee asked about affordable housing for Heathrow key workers. The Group Head for Regeneration and Growth advised that the Strategic Planning Team would assess whether an expanded Heathrow would have a significant impact in terms of the need for additional housing provision as part of the review of the Local Plan. The Council has also said that it would be happy to build and manage housing for both key and construction workers at Heathrow. She offered to provide the Committee with a more detailed response from the Strategic Planning Manager about housing for key workers after the meeting.

Resolved to note the presentation and request a detailed response on provision of housing for Heathrow key workers.

17/19 Housing Options

The Housing Options Manager gave the Committee an update on the Council's successful implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act, the Choice Based Lettings Scheme, Rent Assure Scheme initiatives and progress being made for the White House Site.

The Homeless Reduction Act was the biggest change in homeless legislation in 30 years. He reported that Spelthorne Council was assessed by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government as being well prepared for the implementation of the Act. Due to previous good practice and the adoption of initiatives to assist in homeless prevention, and an

understanding of the causes of homelessness locally, Spelthorne Borough Council did not predict a significant increase in the numbers of households approaching for assistance and this was borne out.

The Committee congratulated the Housing Team on the way they had implemented the legislation.

Resolved to note the update on Housing Options.

18/19 Leisure Centre Consultation

The Deputy Chief Executive, Lee O'Neil, presented an update on progress with the first phase of consultation on the Council's proposals for a new Spelthorne Leisure Centre. The report outlined the process undertaken, a summary of the results received and some issues to be addressed prior to moving forward with any future phases of consultation on this project.

The Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, commented that the Council had consulted, listened to residents' concerns and responded by agreeing it would not build on Staines Park and confirmed its intention by designating it with Fields in Trust (FIT) status.

The Chairman invited Cath Moore to make a statement on behalf of Staines Park Residents (SPR) Group. She referred to the collaborative engagement between the SPR Group and the Council and was pleased the Council had recognised the strength of feeling of residents and designated Staines Park with FIT status.

She detailed the issues which had raised concerns for residents about the way the consultation was undertaken. She expressed her gratitude to councillors for the cross-party support of residents.

Mr O'Neil thanked Ms Moore for her feedback and noted the issues she raised. He advised that the Council was using lessons learned from the first phase consultation in considering how to resource the future consultation process and take forward proposals for a new Spelthorne Leisure Centre.

Resolved to note the outcome of the Council's first phase consultation on its plans for a new Spelthorne Leisure Centre.

19/19 Project Management Dashboard

The Group Head for Commissioning and Transformation presented an update report on the progress of projects and their outcomes across the Council.

Members commended officers for their work on improving the format and content of the update reports. The Committee queried the omission of confidential information on the property development reports relating to risks and requested that this be included in a Part 2 (confidential) report at the March meeting in order that the members could effectively scrutinise the matter before them. The Chairman agreed that in view of the disclosure of

commercially sensitive material the Leader should see the reports before their release.

Resolved:

1. to note the update on Corporate Project Management and
2. to request information on risks relating to the Council's property development projects be included in the report at the next meeting of the Committee. This report to be sent to the Leader in the first instance.

20/19 Work Programme

The Committee noted the work programme for the last meeting of the Municipal year subject to the inclusion of an item on Commercial acquisitions and their associated risks.

21/19 Exempt Business

It was moved, seconded and

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.

22/19 Exempt Item - Capital Strategy Report

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

The Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Governance presented the exempt report on the draft Capital Strategy, ahead of its consideration by the Cabinet. The aim of the Capital Strategy was to provide a clear and concise account to residents and other stakeholders of how the Council is going to prioritise its capital expenditure in the short, medium and long-term, and how it manages risks with respect to delivering those capital objectives.

The Strategy was supported by other documents including Asset Management plans and Treasury Management plans. It provided an overview of why, where and how capital would be spent in order to contribute to the provision of services for residents, and to meet some of the Council's wider strategic aims.

Members remarked on the Council's professionalism in developing its capital strategy and seeking assistance from other companies and advisors, in order to maintain services for residents.

Resolved to note and endorse the report on a draft Capital Strategy and congratulate officers on the professionalism of their approach.