

**Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
4 October 2021**

Present:

Councillor L. E. Nichols (Chairman)

Councillors:

C.F. Barnard	R.J. Noble	I.J. Beardsmore
V.J. Leighton	S.A. Dunn	V. Siva
S. Buttar	O. Rybinski	
S.C. Mooney	S.M. Doran	

Substitutions: Councillors H. Harvey (In place of A. Brar)

In Attendance: Councillors C. Bateson, M. Beecher and R.D. Dunn.

405/21 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Sexton, Boughtflower and Brar (substituted by Councillor H Harvey).

406/21 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

407/21 Disclosures of Interest

Councillor Leighton declared an interest in agenda item 4 (Stadbury Meadow Car Park) and did not participate in discussions.

408/21 Stadbury Meadow Car Park

The committee was pleased that this longstanding matter was now drawing to a conclusion. The agreement had been signed on 21 September 2021, and outstanding matters were now being administered.

It was hoped that the Council had learned lessons from this matter, in particular when assessing the risks around commencing litigation.

Resolved that the report be noted.

409/21 Recommendations from the committees

a Acquisition of Registered Providers' Street Properties

This report was making preparations for the 2022-23 Capital Programme. Knowle Green Estates would receive the assets (to be financed by loan finance from the Council) and would manage the assets. The long term viability analysis indicated that it would be viable for KGE to hold the assets (as long as appropriate purchase prices were paid).

There was discussion about inviting the directors of Knowle Green Estates to a future meeting of this committee or to the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee.

Resolved that:

1. The Acquisition of Registered Providers Street Properties Policy be approved; and
2. A Capital Programme recommendation be made for 2022-23 for approval by Council in February 2022.

b Staines Library

It was proposed by Councillor C Barnard, Seconded by Councillor S Doran and **resolved** that the public and press be excluded during consideration of this item, in accordance with paragraph 3 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.

The recommendations, as set out in the report, were agreed.

See separate minutes.

c Proposal to Acquire Additional Car Parking by Way of a Lease – Charter Building, Uxbridge

It was proposed by Councillor C Barnard, Seconded by Councillor S Doran and **resolved** that the public and press be

excluded during consideration of this item, in accordance with paragraph 3 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 any lease, contract or other type of negotiation with the tenant or developer, who could then know the position of the Council.

The Committee agreed that the Council enter into a 15 year lease at Grainge's Car Park, subject to the terms set out in the report.

See separate minutes.

410/21 Procurement of Mechanical Installations Service and Maintenance (for planned and responsive maintenance)

[Councillor H Harvey joined the meeting.]

The performance monitoring of contractors was discussed. Contractors' financial statuses were also evaluated. It was suggested that specific key performance indicators be written into the contracts, and that there be a rigorous process for monitoring them. The Committee was reassured about the rationale for bringing some of the services 'in-house'.

The Committee approved the terms and procurement processes for the following new contracts which were scheduled to commence on 01 April 2022 for an initial contract term to be for a period of three (3) years, with the option to extend annually for a further two (2) 12-month periods, in the Council's sole discretion, and taking into account the contractor's performance on the contract.

1. Mechanical installations maintenance services for Council's municipal and residential properties
2. Electrical installations maintenance services for Council's municipal and residential properties
3. General Building Reactive works for Council's municipal and residential properties

The Committee:

- i. delegated the approval of the appointment of the contractors to the Group Head of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
- ii. authorised the Head of Corporate Governance to enter into any legal documentation necessary to implement the new contracts.

411/21 Additional Short Term Funding for KGE

It was proposed by Councillor C Barnard, Seconded by Councillor S Doran and **resolved** that the public and press be excluded during consideration of this item, in accordance with paragraph 3 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 the bidding process for the site/services by allowing other bidders to know the position of the Council. This in turn prejudices the Council by (i) distorting the bids process and (ii) prejudicing the opportunity for the Council to acquire a site/services to enable regeneration in the Borough.

The Committee approved an initial loan amount of £250,000, with the ability to approve further amounts, subject to it receiving a satisfactory business case from Knowle Green Estates (KGE). The Committee requested the attendance of representatives KGE's board at a future Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

See separate minutes.

412/21 Asset Management Plan - Annual Report

It was noted that the plan had been subjected to a significant update.

The Committee:

1. noted the update on actions for Year 1.
2. approved the new actions for Year 2 for inclusion within the overall action plan.

413/21 Capital monitoring (Qtr. 1 April-June)

Suggestions on the content and presentation of future reports were welcomed outside the meeting. It was hoped that a reporting process that made best use of committee bandwidth would evolve over time.

A precis of questions that had been asked at other committees was provided. The impact of Covid-19 was also mentioned. The expenditure for the Elmsleigh Centre had been approved by the former Cabinet in February 2021.

The Committee noted the current level of underspend on capital expenditure against its Capital Programme provision as at 30 June 2021 for the Council and the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee's areas of responsibility.

414/21 Revenue monitoring (Qtr. 1 April-June)

Suggestions on the content and presentation of future reports were welcomed outside the meeting.

[Councillor Beardsmore left the meeting.]

A precis of questions that had been asked at other committees was provided. The impact of Covid-19 was also mentioned. There was the potential for a significant impact on the Council's finances if its interest payments on housing delivery projects not yet completed could not be met from capital, should the moratorium on high rise developments in Staines-upon-Thames continue much longer. This was being closely monitored.

The Committee noted the forecast underspend outturn for 2021/22 as at 30 June 2021 for the Council and its areas of responsibility.

415/21 Re-procurement of Property Management Contracts

There had been a comprehensive tendering exercise carried out. The process for evaluating the bids that had been submitted was noted.

The Committee:

- approved the proposed sourcing strategy for property management contract renewals (a mini-tender with the Property Management consultancies on Lot 5 of SBC's Professional Services Framework Agreement);
- noted the proposed timetable for the procurement of the commercial and retail property management contracts.

416/21 Sundry Debt Write Offs

The individual write off amounts were reviewed. It was considered uneconomical to pursue the amounts owed due to the low likelihood of success.

The Committee approved the sundry debt write offs set out amounting to £81,332.76.

417/21 Verbal update on the corporate plan

The verbal update was noted.

418/21 Appointments

a **Outside bodies**

The Committee appointed Councillor Leighton as the Council's representative on the Thames Landscape Strategy Partnership.

b **Development Sub-Committee**

Councillors Mooney and Buttar were recommended to be appointed by Council to the Development Sub-Committee.

c **Waterfront Hotel Investigation Review Group**

No further appointments were made to the Waterfront Hotel Investigation Review Group.

419/21 Forward Plan

The Committee noted the forward plan.

It was agreed that:

1. the tenancy strategy item be considered at the meeting on 15 November 2021.
2. a full business case for the proposed Transactional Financial Service Partnership be considered at the meeting on 15 November 2021.

420/21 Urgent Actions

The urgent actions of the Chief Executive were noted.

421/21 Update on proposed Transactional Financial Service Partnership

The chair agreed to this item being added to the agenda in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following reasons:

This report seeks to progress the proposed agreement with Mole Valley District Council as soon as possible. Delaying the agreement will impact on service resilience, the councils' ability to recruit and retain staff, and limit any efficiencies that can potentially be made.

Spelthorne and Mole Valley both utilised the same finance systems which removed some of the complexity around sharing resources. Some officers were also familiar with the local arrangements of both councils.

It was hoped that the Committee would agree to enter into a memorandum of understanding, with various safeguards and clear exit arrangements for each

council. There was the potential for the shared service to accept other partners once it was established.

The intended benefits of the shared service were mentioned, including resilience and economies of scale. There were no planned redundancies in either finance team, with the proposals being cost neutral, and both councils being in a reasonably strong financial position.

The Committee questioned whether there had been any learning points identified when previous shared service arrangements had failed. It was noted that there was a clear vision for the proposed partnership.

[The committee agreed that the meeting should continue for a maximum of 30 minutes, in accordance with standing order 38.2.]

There was a good level of buy in among officers in both teams, with a desire to share and implement best practice. The location of staff was less of an issue, now that remote working had become commonplace.

It was noted that whilst the timescales for creating a shared service were demanding, officers were confident that it could be delivered in accordance with the planned timeline.

The committee noted the proposed partnership and requested that a full business case be presented at the meeting on 15 November 2021.