

**Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
19 January 2022**

Present:

Councillor L. E. Nichols (Chairman)
Councillor J.R. Sexton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

C.F. Barnard	S.M. Doran	S.C. Mooney
J.R. Boughtflower	S.A. Dunn	R.J. Noble
A. Brar	N. Islam	V. Siva
S. Buttar	V.J. Leighton	

Apologies: Councillors I.J. Beardsmore and O. Rybinski

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

1/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

2/22 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

3/22 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

4/22 Ward Issues

There were none.

5/22 2021-22 additional pay uplift

It was reported that weighting pay awards in favour of lower pay grades was beginning to result in the affected pay rates becoming compacted against the grades above. This was making it less attractive to existing employees

interested in taking on more responsibility, for relatively little financial gain. Recruitment into professional and management roles was currently more challenging, particularly due to Spelthorne generally paying less than other nearby local authorities. The increasing rate of inflation also required careful consideration.

UNISON had signalled its approval of the latest proposed pay offer.

The Committee approved option A, as set out in the officer's report.

6/22 Pay Policy Statement

The Committee recommended that Council approve the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23.

7/22 Update on Moratorium

The legal advice that had been provided in the report was emphasised, in particular that due to the terms of the moratorium's imposition being satisfied, it was no longer in effect. The consequential challenging financial situation that had been caused by ongoing delays to certain residential/regeneration developments was highlighted. Such challenges included delayed income from residential rents, the servicing of loans, and the possibility of needing to transfer accumulated interest payments from Capital to Revenue.

There was discussion about the content of the report, with some councillors feeling that the moratorium on taller developments should not be discussed in isolation. It was also suggested that it was important to review the very recent Inland Homes planning appeal inquiry outcome that had found against the Planning Committee's decision. Additionally, councillors for the Staines area were keen to include details of the alternative options for development that they had been discussing, with a view to reaching a compromise that they felt balanced the needs of Staines with the entirety of the borough.

The possibility of deferring further consideration of the report was discussed. It was felt that this presented a significant financial risk to Spelthorne.

The wider financial impact of the Council's recent decisions on development were debated, with it generally felt that this had given rise to challenging budgetary conditions, the result of which was currently being considered by committees as part of the annual Budget setting process. The Council's affordable homes target was also at risk of not being met due to delays in Spelthorne's own developments and private developers seeking to maximise profits by limiting any affordable homes element to schemes.

The suggestion of a working group that had input into scheme design before projects reached the Development Sub-Committee (DSC) was made. Some members felt that such a group would lack the expertise that enabled it to

make meaningful contributions to schemes. The DSC also already had a role in considering the design of schemes.

A recorded vote was requested in accordance with Standing Order 21.5(a). Votes were recorded as follows:

FOR the officers' recommendation (9)

Nichols, Sexton, Barnard, Brar, Buttar, Doran, Dunn, Leighton and Noble

AGAINST the officers' recommendation (3)

Boughtflower, Islam and Mooney

There were no abstentions.

The Committee:

1. Noted that the previous moratorium was no longer in place.
2. Did not impose a further moratorium.

8/22 Procurement of 2021/22 Planned Maintenance Contract

The Committee:

1. Approved the proposed procurement process (a mini competition from Lot 1 of SBC's Contractors framework agreement) for a new contract to carry out planned maintenance works across nineteen (19) municipal sites in the current financial year (2021/22).
2. Delegated the appointment of the contractor (contract award) to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.
3. Authorised the Head of Corporate Governance to enter into any legal documentation necessary to implement the new contract.

9/22 Exclusion of Public and Press (Exempt Business)

It was proposed by Councillor Sexton, Seconded by Councillor Boughtflower, 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. The reasons for this were because disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in a competitive procurement process by allowing other bidders to know the financial position of the Council and other bidders. This in turn prejudiced the Council by (i) distorting the procurement process and (ii) prejudiced the opportunity for the Council to achieve a competitive price and good value for money and (iii) might dissuade organisations bidding for the

Council's tenders if their commercial information was put into the public domain.

10/22 EXEMPT ITEM - Re-tender of Property Management Contracts

The framework for this tendering exercise had been agreed by the former Cabinet. There was discussion about the suitability of the recommended providers. Their submissions were reviewed

The Committee approved the award of contracts for property management of the retail and the commercial portfolios to the preferred bidders, as detailed in the tender report.

11/22 Budget - 2022/23: Revenue and Capital

The process for considering the budget for 2022/23 was explained to the Committee. As part of this process, the Committee was invited to consider its recommendations to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 7 February 2022, where all service committee recommendations would be available for consideration as part of the detailed budget report. A subsequent recommendation would then be made to Council on 24 February 2022.

There was currently a projected revenue budget deficit of approximately £1.35m which the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee needed to address, in order to deliver a legally required balanced budget.

a Capital Bids 2022/23 (part of annual budget process)

It was noted that the capital bid for a Development Manager had been withdrawn because it had been accounted for in the current year's Capital Budget.

There was discussion about the scope of the projects, including whether each could be modified, and the degree of consultation to be held ward councillors. There was also discussion about whether the values attributed to each bid represented value for money, although further information was needed to assist these considerations. Some projects would also be supported by grant funding and the proposed budgets needed to incorporate a degree of contingency to allow for survey findings and any remedial works (such as the decontamination of land).

The Committee agreed that all of the proposed capital expenditure projects be considered at the meeting on 7 February 2022, subject to there being additional information provided on:

1. The associated ongoing revenue costs for each item.
2. Any external funding bids linked to proposed capital expenditure (where applicable).
3. How bid amounts had been calculated.

b Revenue Growth and Savings Bids 2022/23 (part of annual budget process)

There was discussion about the level of resource that had been requested by the assets team. It was explained that this was, in part, necessary to manage the growing number of affordable housing tenancies held with Knowle Green Estates (KGE). A higher proportion of affordable tenants to private rental compared to original plans required a higher level of tenancy support resourcing. The new posts relating to supporting KGE tenants would be recouped from KGE. Clarity on this would be provided in the final detailed budget report.

The inclusion of a bid for Sunbury leisure centre maintenance was removed, as it had already been accounted for in the current year's budget.

The Committee noted the proposed revenue growth and savings bids, along with the officer assigned red/amber/green ratings, and agreed that these should be considered at the meeting on 7 February 2022 where bids from other committees would also be available.

c Committee Review of Fees and Charges for Service Areas 2022/23 (part of annual budget process)

Most of the proposed fees and charges across the Council incorporated an inflationary uplift of 3%. This would require consideration in light of the current rate of inflation, which was projected to rise further during the year meaning that the Committee might wish to increase the inflation percentage uplift.

The Committee noted the proposed fees and charges for 2022/23 and recommended that they be considered at the 7 February 2022 meeting along with the recommended fees and charges from other service committees, subject to:

1. Details of the income received from all discretionary and statutory fees and charges being provided for the next meeting.
2. A proposal that incorporated an inflationary increase for fees and charges relating to assets being brought forward.

12/22 Capital Strategy 2022 to 2027 - draft for discussion

The draft Capital Strategy 2022-27 was noted.

13/22 Capital and Revenue Reserves Strategy - draft for discussion

The importance of having a comprehensive capital and revenue Reserves Strategy was emphasised to the Committee, particularly because there were examples of local authorities encountering significant financial issues largely due to the poor use of their reserves.

The draft Capital and Revenue Reserves Strategy was noted.

14/22 Update on proposed Transactional Financial Service Partnership

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

15/22 Forward Plan

The forward plan was agreed.

16/22 Urgent Actions

The urgent actions were noted.

17/22 Urgent business

There was no urgent business.