

**Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
11 July 2022**

Present:

Councillor J.R. Boughtflower (Chairman)

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell	T. Fidler	J.R. Sexton
I.J. Beardsmore	H. Harvey	V. Siva
M. Beecher	L. E. Nichols	

Substitutions: Councillors C. Bateson (In place of S.A. Dunn)

Apologies: Councillors A.J. Mitchell, C.F. Barnard, J.T.F. Doran, S.C. Mooney and R.J. Noble

68/22 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillors Mitchell, Barnard, J Doran, S Dunn (substituted by Councillor Bateson), Mooney and Noble.

69/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

70/22 Disclosures of Interest

Councillor Attewell declared that she was an assistant cabinet member at Surrey County Council.

71/22 Questions from members of the Public

There were none.

72/22 Ward Issues

There were none.

73/22 Shared Prosperity Fund

An introduction on the work of the task group was provided by its chair, Councillor Fidler. There was a short window, set by the government, in which bids for grant funding could be submitted. The working group had therefore carried out a significant amount of work in a brief period.

Ways in which the consultation exercise could be conducted, to ensure that it had the widest possible reach, were highlighted to the committee.

There were questions asked about the criteria used to assess applications. Members of the working group believed that the criteria used were robust and stated that they were happy to share these with the wider committee. Each applicant had been required to submit business plans which could also be made available to the committee.

The possibility of collaboration with Surrey County Council or other local districts, to ensure the best possible use of the fund, was raised. There was discussion about the proposals for the Oast House project, and how it would relate to wider proposals for the site.

It was anticipated that adjustments to any proposals put forward to the government could be sought if they became necessary.

The task group and its supporting officers were commended for what they had achieved in the short period of time available to them.

The committee agreed:

1. That the projects/proposals set out in Appendix B be included in the Investment Plan to be submitted to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
2. That due to the time constraints on this project, consultation should be utilise as many avenues as possible including social media, established lines of communication with community groups, the council's website, etc.
3. That any final amendments to the Investment Plan document, as a result of feedback from the MP or the consultation, be delegated to the Group Head for Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the chair and vice chair of Corporate Policy and Resources Committee.

74/22 Surrey Delivery Board

A verbal update on the work of the Surrey Delivery Board, and the proposed County Deal, was provided. A more detailed written report would be provided in due course.

There was discussion about whether proposals would affect Spelthorne's economic development functions and whether funding would be drawn from the two local enterprise partnerships.

75/22 Procurement of Waste and Street Cleansing Vehicles

There was a discussion about whether Spelthorne Borough Council should be an early adopter of new lower emission technologies in view of its commitment to reduce its carbon footprint. The risks of doing so, in particular the uncertainty around the lifespan of such vehicles, were highlighted. The cost of doing so also needed careful consideration as it attracted a significant cost premium over more traditionally fuelled vehicles. The report was therefore seeking authority to obtain quotes for a variety of options, with a view to enabling councillors to make an informed decision around the purchasing and leasing of new vehicles in due course.

The length of the proposed leases was discussed. It attempted to balance the falling reliability of ageing vehicles (and the associated impact on service delivery) with the additional value for money obtained through longer leases. Additional considerations included the need to upgrade power and maintenance systems at the council's depot, should a large number of electric vehicles be purchased.

The Committee:

1. Authorised the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services to go out to tender for the replacement of the seventeen leased vehicles listed at paragraph 3.4 of the officer's report.
2. Authorised the Group Head of Neighbourhood Services to go out to tender for the replacement of four purchased vehicles listed at paragraph 3.4 of the officer's report.
3. Agree that the lease of the workshop at the White House Depot is incorporated into the maintenance agreement for the vehicles to reduce lease costs.

76/22 Disabled Facilities Grant Policy

The proposed policy would bring closer alignment to other authorities, many of whom had now taken into account newly released government guidance. The key differences between the proposed and existing policies (which had already been reviewed by the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee) were highlighted.

The funding arrangements, including the handling of over and underspends, was discussed.

The committee agreed the Disabled facility Grant (DFG) and Better Care Funding Policy for disabled residents.

77/22 Procedures for dealing with applications to extend Council owned assets or develop on Council land

The current policy did not provide a mechanism for the community to bid to use council owned sites. It was therefore necessary to review the policy before any further decisions were made.

Some of the examples in the exempt appendix were discussed, in particular whether the sites were described correctly. This information would be reviewed by the task group. The task group would also review the structure of the policy to ensure that it was able to cater for a range of scenarios.

The committee:

1. Established a task group, as set out in the report, consisting of Councillors Attewell, Boughtflower, Nichols, Sexton and either the chair or vice-chair of the Economic Development Committee.
2. Agreed that Officers were not to pursue such applications until the Committee had approved a strategy.

78/22 Update for the Estimated Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2025/26

The level of the variances was discussed. It was confirmed that they were not of concern and primarily caused by project timelines changing, resulting in the need for them to be accounted for in different financial years. Members requested that a process be developed, to notify the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, of budget variances on a periodic basis. It was also suggested that variances be clearly highlighted in reports.

The committee agreed the amendments to the estimated Capital Programme for the projects mentioned in the officer's report, resulting in a decrease to the estimated Capital Programme of £184,147.

79/22 Treasury Management Outturn report

The prudential indicators had all been given a 'green' rating (on the basis of red/amber/green) which was a positive outcome for the council. The transition to greener investments was underway, but would take time to carry out without introducing significant risk to the council's finances.

It was requested that an all councillor briefing be provided on the council's treasury management strategy.

The committee noted the treasury outturn position for 2021/22.

80/22 Q4 Capital Monitoring Report

The increase in capital costs was discussed. It was stated that delays in developments were a significant reason for this, particularly in the context of high inflation, especially in the construction sector.

There was discussion about the costs relating to existing projects. It was suggested that the Development Sub-Committee be asked to review this information in detail.

The committee:

1. Noted the current level of overspend on capital expenditure, for both the Council and the areas of responsibility for the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, against its Capital Programme provision as at 31 March 2022.
2. Requested that the Development Sub-Committee review the request to increase the budget associated with the Oast House project, prior to making a recommendation to Council.

81/22 Q4 Revenue Monitoring Report

The committee noted the outturn for 2021/22 as at 31 March 2022 and:

1. Agreed to set aside £2.490m for the properties sinking fund.
2. Transferred £0.650m to the general fund
3. Transferred a £0.603m surplus from retained business rates to the business rates equalisation reserve.
4. Transferred £0.250m of the green initiatives fund to reserves.

82/22 Draft Unaudited Accounts 2021/22

There was discussion about the rental yields that the council was obtaining for its properties. It was requested that more information on void rates be provided in future reports.

The committee noted the report and the draft unaudited financial statements, based upon the Outturn Report for 2021/22, submitted and agreed earlier at this meeting.

83/22 22/23 Budget Pressures Due To Inflation

The committee approved the transfer of £362,000, as highlighted in paragraph 3.5 of the officer's report, to an earmarked reserve to be used to support the funding of the cost of living crisis during 2022/23.

84/22 23/24 Budget Setting Process

Due to the time constraints on the meeting, this item was deferred to an informal meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, with any formal recommendations (where applicable) to be considered at a future committee.

85/22 Membership of the Collaborative Working Group

Due to the time constraints on the meeting, this item was deferred to an informal meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, with any formal recommendations (where applicable) to be considered at a future committee.

86/22 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Due to the time constraints on the meeting, this item was deferred to an informal meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, with any formal recommendations (where applicable) to be considered at a future committee.

87/22 Recovery Action Plan

Due to the time constraints on the meeting, this item was deferred to an informal meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, with any formal recommendations (where applicable) to be considered at a future committee.

88/22 Forward Plan

It was agreed that:

1. A briefing on the Treasury Management Strategy be held for Corporate Policy and Resources Committee members.
2. A further briefing on the proposals for the Oast House site be held for all councillors.
3. A digital transformation working group be established, consisting of Councillors Beardsmore, Boughtflower and Nichols, with some proposed terms of reference considered at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 10 October 2022.

4. A 'policy services' working group be established, with the membership and terms of reference to be considered at the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on 10 October 2022. Due to the time constraints on the meeting, further consideration of this item was deferred to an informal meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, with any formal recommendations (where applicable) to be considered at a future committee.

89/22 Urgent Actions

Due to the time constraints on the meeting, this item was deferred to an informal meeting of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee, with any formal recommendations (where applicable) to be considered at a future committee.