

**Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
11 September 2023**

Present:

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

Councillors:

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

89/23 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Button and Geraci.

90/23 Disclosures of Interest

Councillor Nichols advised the Committee that he was a member of the Knowle Green Estates Board and would therefore not vote on Item 11 (Letter to Knowle Green Estates).

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

91/23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2023 were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

92/23 Questions from members of the Public

The Committee received two questions from Mr Nigel Rowe.

Preamble

Item 5 on the agenda (Revised Housing Delivery Policy) proposes a massive and radical change in Council policy. It raises major questions and concerns as to the proposal's provenance, purpose and anticipated consequences. The

Committee will hopefully explore these matters fully and publicly before endorsing the proposal 1) given the proposal's strategic significance for the Council and the community whose best interests it is there to serve and 2) given the Council has acquired a significant number of sites explicitly for development by the Council.

Question 1:

In the pursuit of proper democratic accountability, will the Committee ensure residents are given a full and explicit explanation of the provenance, purpose and anticipated consequences of the intended policy change in advance of any public consultation on it?

Response to question 1:

The reason for re-considering the policy change is directly connected to the financial risks of direct delivery of development as set out in the report i.e., construction costs increasing as well as interest rates nearly doubling. The council is still committed to bring forward new housing and other regeneration aspirations, hence is now exploring alternative methods to deliver these.

As a consequence of an agreed policy change and the Council not continuing with the direct delivery of developments schemes, it is expected capital costs already incurred in respect of these development schemes will need to be re-charged to the revenue budget. These impacts and how they will be handled will be set out in the reports going to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and Council meetings in October.

If the change of policy is agreed, then thorough consideration and review will be given to all potential alternative delivery methods which will include understanding the advantages, disadvantages, and suitability of each.

On completion of this process, assuming a suitable and beneficial delivery method is identified, the council will then be able to provide residents with full details of how this may change the delivery of our developments.

Question 2:

Will the Committee ensure that, if the proposed change of policy is endorsed, all Council policies and intents (eg restrictions on the height of new developments in the draft Local Plan's Zoning Scheme) will be codified as strict and binding conditions with third-party developers?

Response to question 2:

As part of the review of all delivery mechanisms, the Council will need to decide how much development risk is acceptable as this will have a direct bearing on the level of control the council retains as the schemes are

progressed. The risk vs control scenarios will be fully analysed, which will allow the Council to understand the impact on its policies and intentions, both in respect of existing and emerging policy.

93/23 Revised Housing Delivery Policy 2023/24

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Accountant and Group Head of Assets.

The Committee were advised that carrying on with the current strategy was no longer viable and that different options needed to be considered. A range of non-site specific delivery options would be presented to the Development Sub-Committee for them to consider the suitability of each. A report would be brought back before the committee in October for them to consider the possible options for the vacant sites.

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower and seconded by Councillor Rybinski that a recorded vote be taken for each option.

Option 1:

For: Councillors Attewell, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boughtflower, J Doran, S Doran, Gibson, Grant, Howkins, Lee, Nichols, Rutherford, Rybinski, Sexton, Williams (16 Votes).

Against: (0)

Abstain: (0)

Option 1:

For: Councillors Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, J Doran, S Doran, Gibson, Grant, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Williams (11)

Against: (0)

Abstain: Councillors Attewell, Boughtflower, Howkins, Lee, Rybinski (5)

Option 3:

For: Councillors Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, J Doran, S Doran, Gibson, Grant, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Williams (11)

Against: (0)

Abstain: Councillors Attewell, Boughtflower, Howkins, Lee, Rybinski (5)

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Confirm its support to suspend the Council's residential developments,
2. Support, in principle that the Council explores new ways of delivering the affordable and private rental housing delivery strategy; and
3. Bring back revised strategies and policies to the October Corporate Policy & Resources Committee meeting and subsequent Council meeting on 16 October 2023.

A summary of the recommendations was given within the report as follows:

Support in principle recommending to Council that this authority explores new ways of delivering the Council's affordable housing development schemes, by moving away from direct delivery, apart from the Local Authorities Housing Fund Acquisitions Scheme (single property) acquisitions to initially house Afghan families which will be funded with a higher level of government grant.

94/23 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy

The Committee considered a report from the Sustainability and Flood Risk Officer that sought a decision on whether to adopt the electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy 2023-2030 as outlined in Appendix A of the report.

The Committee were advised that this strategy had been created as an outcome of a cross service officer working group. As part of the project, members and residents would be consulted with to understand who would use the charging points and where would be best to place them.

The Committee **resolved** to adopt the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy 2023-2023

95/23 Parking Services - Business Model

The Committee considered a report from The Parking Services Manager and the Group Head Neighbourhood Services. They were advised that an agency agreement with Surrey County Council for management of on street parking had ended in March 2023 which had created an opportunity to look at different options to maximise efficiency and provide best value for money within Parking Services.

The Parking Services Manager advised that in the medium term, whilst other options were explored, the Council's car parks would continue to be run as per the current business model.

The Committee asked that they be presented with a projected forecast of car parking in the Borough for the next 5 –10 years, including any possible car parking that may be lost due to potential developments or sale of Council owned land.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Enhance the current model to partner with other authorities (as outlined in Option 5 within the report) and to enable the Parking Services Operational Manager and the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to explore opportunities to partner with other Local Authorities,
2. Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to continue managing the parking service with the current business model; and
3. Authorise the Group Head Neighbourhood Services to chair a working group across interested authorities for shared services and represent the Council interests in that group.

96/23 Laleham Nursery improvements

The Committee considered a report from the Group Head Neighbourhood Services.

The Committee were advised that Capital Funding had been agreed to replace dilapidated temporary office space at Laleham Nursery to be used by the Joint Enforcement Team. Following a tender exercise for the replacement portacabins it had not proved viable to continue with this plan.

The Committee **resolved** to agree that the funding allocated for replacement porta cabins used as office space by the Joint Enforcement Team (JET) is reallocated to be used to create new permanent office and meeting space within the existing nursery building and provide improved facilities for Surrey Choices.

97/23 Verbal Update - External Audit

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chief Accountant on the external audit.

98/23 Corporate Risk Register (Corporate Risk Management)

The Committee **resolved** to note the significant strategic risks and issues highlighted in this report, ensuring continued wider reporting of the Corporate Risk Register and Risk Action Plan across the other committees.

99/23 Letter to Knowle Green Estates

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Accountant who advised them, that as part of the 2022/23 audit process a letter needed to be sent to the auditors confirming the Council's continued support of Knowle Green Estates in their role as the sole shareholder.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Formally minute the Council's ongoing support for KGE, in accordance with the wording provided by the Company's External Auditors in Appendix A of the report; and
2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to sign a letter on behalf of the Council advising the auditors of Knowle Green Estates that this has been agreed by the Committee and duly minuted.

100/23 Collaborative Working Group

The Committee considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive that sought approval to amend the Terms of Reference for the Collaborative Working Group to allow a change in the membership structure.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the meetings would be held during the day and that members of the working group could attend via Microsoft Teams.

The Committee **resolved** to agree a revised membership structure for the Council's Collaborative Working Group that would invite each Group Leader to nominate a representative to sit on his group.

101/23 Forward Plan

The Committee **resolved** to note the contents of the Forward Plan.

102/23 Urgent Actions

The Committee **resolved** to note the update on the urgent action.

103/23 Exclusion of Public & Press (Exempt Business)

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson and Seconded by Councillor Williams and **resolved** that the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items, 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:

104/23 Corporate Policy and Resources Chair's Updates

The Leader advised the Committee that the period of time agreed for a pause to the Local Plan had now lapsed and would be considered again at the Extraordinary Council Meeting to be held on Thursday 14 September 2023.