

**Minutes of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
15 October 2024**

Present:

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

Councillors:

M. Beecher	R.V. Geach	M.J. Lee
M. Bing Dong	M. Gibson	S.C. Mooney
J.R. Boughtflower	K.M. Grant	O. Rybinski
J. Button	K. Howkins	H.R.D. Williams

116/24 Apologies and Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillors Doran and Nichols.

Councillor Beatty attended as a substitute for Councillor Doran and Councillor Dunn attended as a substitute for Councillor Nichols.

117/24 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 09 September were agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

118/24 Disclosures of Interest

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

119/24 Questions from members of the Public

In accordance with Standing Order 40 one question was received from Kath Sanders, as follows:

The Corporate Risk Management Report states under Local Plan (2.6(b) p.3):
"A draft Statement of Common Ground has been sent to the EA for their consideration which, if agreed, will mean there is agreement on all substantive

matters, and that a key stakeholder is now satisfied that their concerns have been fully addressed."

Would the Council agree that, turning that around, it is correct to say that for the last two years, since September 2022, there hasn't been agreement on all substantive matters, and that a key stakeholder did not believe the proposed Local Plan to be sound when it was submitted?"

The Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee responded as follows:

"The decision on whether or not a Local Plan can be found sound is ultimately solely a matter for the Inspector. The view of the EA that it does not consider our plan sound is their view only as one of our many stakeholders. As a Council we have to consider the matter 'in the round' and there will be always be stakeholders with opposing views – our role is to submit a local plan which the Council considers is capable of being found sound.

It is acknowledged that the EA are one of the Specific Consultation Bodies and as such the Inspector will pay particular attention to their representations. It is always possible as part the Examination process for the Inspector to agree whether any Modifications are required as a result of consultee comments or attendance at the Examination itself to talk through any outstanding issues.

To bring all members and residents up to date, I am very pleased to confirm that last evening (14 October) the EA signed a Statement of Common Ground with the Council. This means all the flooding issues the EA had have been satisfactorily addressed. A letter went to the Planning Inspector late this morning to advise him of this (including a copy of the Statement of Common Ground). A copy has been emailed to all councillors this afternoon, and the statement has been uploaded to the Local Plan area of the Council's website. I would like to express my thanks to the whole strategic planning team, and in particular the Local Plans Manager Jane Robinson, for getting us to this significant milestone.

A report will be going to Council next Thursday on getting the Local Plan back to Examination".

120/24 Reflections Water Feature

The Committee considered a report that sought agreement of one of the options outlined in the report in respect of the Reflections Water Feature that forms part of the Staines War Memorial.

Concerns were raised about the potential flooding of the underground pump room but they were advised that the proposed business sponsor was aware of this and had agreed to deal with any flooding issues in the future.

The Committee were advised that the Council would continue to retain the liability for the water feature and would ensure that level of safety would be maintained to the current level.

The Committee agreed that Option 2 within the report was the preferred option and would mean that the water feature would be repaired and maintained by the sponsor for a minimum period of 3 years after which a 6 months break clause would be in operation and would be at no cost to the Council.

The Committee **resolved** to agree to allow a local business sponsor to carry out repairs and maintenance at no cost to the Council for a minimum of three years; and

Delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to agree the terms and enter necessary documentation

121/24 Sunbury Leisure Centre

The Committee were asked to consider and approve the submission of a planning application for the Sunbury Leisure Centre.

The Committee asked what the process was prior to the Committee System being adopted at the Council with regard to planning approval being needed for Council owned/leased sites. They were advised that a response would be provided in writing.

The Committee **resolved** to agree the submission of a planning application in relation to the decarbonisation of Sunbury Leisure Centre to add additional Solar PV to Sunbury Leisure Centre, install Air-to-Water Heat Pumps and remove the aging boilers from site.

122/24 Key Performance Indicators 2023/24

The Committee considered a report that outlined the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were reported to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee on an annual basis.

The Committee requested that future reports also included relevant numbers as well as percentage figures so that it would be more informative for members of the Committee.

The Group Head of Commissioning and Transformation advised the Committee that she was actively looking at ways to encourage more customers to sign up to E-billing instead of paper bills as this provided a more efficient and cost saving service.

The Committee requested more information regarding the percentage of planning applications that were approved on appeal. The Group Head of

Commissioning and Transformation advised that this information would be provided for all Committee members.

The Committee **resolved** to note the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be reported on an annual basis to this Committee.

123/24 Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy 2024-2028

Committee considered the report that sought approval of the revised Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy 2024-28.

The Committee asked that training be arranged for members with regard to safeguarding. This had previously been requested at the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee at which time they were advised that training would be provided by Surrey County Council (SCC). The Community Development Manager and Safeguarding Operational Lead advised that she had spoken to SCC and that they had agreed to expediate the training.

The Committee advised that there were some points within the report that needed reviewing so the Chair requested that the officer liaise with members to discuss any amendments required. It was **resolved** that the report would be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Committee on 09 December 2024.

124/24 2023-24 Reserves Outturn Report

Concerns were raised in respect of the content of the report and that it was not easy to understand and should be simplified. The Chief Finance Officer advised the Committee that he would be happy to answer any specific questions that individual members had with regard to clarification of information contained within the report outside of the meeting.

The Committee **resolved** to note the 2023-24 Reserves Outturn Report.

125/24 Change to Treasury Management Strategy – Proposed Draw Down of Pooled Funds

The Committee considered the report on the Change to Treasury Management Strategy – Proposed Draw down of Pooled Funds.

During the discussion on this item a number queries were raised by members:

1. There was a difference in the two financial tables in respect of a sum of £21m as it was only outlined in one of the tables, not both,
2. 'Project A' was referred to in the report but no explanation as to what this actually was,
3. A sum of £97k was attributed to the 'White House' and clarification was sought by the Committee as to what this expenditure related to; and

4. For ease of reading and understanding the financial information included within the tables, the Committee requested that headings should be included to clarify the monetary values of each column and that grid lines be used.

The Chief Finance Officer advised the Committee that all the above information requested would be provided to the Committee members and that future financial reports would be clearer and easier to read.

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council that it approves the amendment to the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25.

The meeting was adjourned at 20.55

The meeting reconvened at 21.05

126/24 Spelthorne Financial Services Partnership

The Committee considered a report on the proposed Finance Service Partnership with Mole Valley District Council.

The Committee were advised that the proposed partnership would not result in any job losses either at Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) nor at Mole Valley District Council (MVDC). The Leader expressed that this initiative was not driven by cost savings but that it would provide resilience across both Councils.

Concerns were raised about security surrounding the financial information held by SBC. The Chief Finance Officer advised that stringent security measures would be implemented to ensure that only information need to facilitate a finance service partnership would be available to MVDC.

The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Approve the creation of a Joint Finance Partnership between Mole Valley District Council and Spelthorne Borough Council,
2. Approve the Heads of Terms for an Intra-Authority Agreement between the two Councils as set out at Appendix 2 of the report and delegate authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Interim Group Head of Corporate Governance to finalise all necessary legal arrangements and agreement to implement the partnership in line with the Heads of Terms,
3. Approve the creation of a Joint Partnership Board and its terms of reference as outlined in Appendix 3 of the report to provide the scrutiny and governance function for the partnership,
4. Approve the staff structure for the partnership outlined at Appendix 5, subject to consultation and to delegate authority to the Section 151

Officer to approve any amendments to the structure following consultation; and

5. Approve the partnership budget outlined in Appendix 4 of the report.

127/24 Appointment of Charity Trustees - Ashford Sick or Needy

The Committee **resolved** to agree the appointments of

Mr G Forsbrey
Mr A Joel and
Councillor S Mooney

as Trustees of the Ashford sick and Needy Charity for a period of four years.

128/24 Corporate Risk Management

The Committee **resolved** to note the significant strategic risks and issues highlighted in the report.

129/24 Forward Plan

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

130/24 Urgent Actions

The Committee were advised of an urgent action that had been made by the Council's Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council. This action consisted of approval to allocate an additional sum of £114k to ensure that sufficient resources would be available to enable the Local Plan to go back to Examination in Spring 2025 and for the Design Code to continue to run parallel to this.

The Leader was asked to provide the date that she had last met with the Local Plan Inspector and advised that she would provide the date to all Committee members.

The Committee **resolved** to note the urgent action that had taken place since the last meeting of this Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson and agreed by the Committee to suspend Standing Order 38.3 to allow the meeting to continue beyond 3 hours.

131/24 Exclusion of Public & Press (Exempt Business)

The Committee **resolved** to move the exclusion of the Press/Public for the following item as the report contains 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 Paragraph 3 – 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

132/24 Housing Options Document Management System

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council that it approves an in-year Capital bid for an Electronic Document Management System for Housing Options

133/24 Procurement of a New Website

The Committee **resolved** to recommend to Council that it:

1. Agrees a supplementary Capital budget for a new website,
2. Agree to proceed with the procurement of a new website,
3. Authorise the Head of Communications and Customer Engagement to carry out the procurement in accordance with Contract Standing Orders; and
4. Authorise the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into any legal documentation necessary to implement the new contract and approve the proposed spend under the contract.

134/24 Corporate Policy and Resources Chair's Updates

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 22.14.