

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday 21st June 2016 at Pippbrook, Dorking, from 7.00pm to 7.57pm

Present:

Executive Members: Councillors Vivienne Michael (Leader/Chairman), Charles Yarwood (Deputy Leader), Lucy Botting, Lynne Brooks, Howard Jones, Corinna Osborne-Patterson and Michelle Watson

Non Executive Members: Mary Cooper, David Draper, David Harper and Simon Ling.

6. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 24th May 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman/Leader.

7. Apologies for Absence

None

8. Disclosure of Interests

None

9. Councillor Question Time

None received

10. Report of the Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee met on 7th June and considered a number of items which were included on the Executive agenda for 21st June 2016. The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, with the approval of the Leader, undertook to submit feedback to the Executive during their consideration of each report.

11. Draft Ashtead Neighbourhood Development Plan

The Executive Member for Planning, Councillor Howard Jones confirmed that the Ashtead Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) had been reviewed by Mole Valley District Council Planning Officers, who have confirmed that the NDP was compliant with the current Local Plan and planning policies and had been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and other relevant legislation. The role of the Executive was to formally confirm the Council's acknowledgement that the Ashtead NDP was compliant and agree that it be passed to the next stage of the process for adopting a NDP, which was a six week consultation period followed by inspection by an independent examiner.

The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor David Harper, advised that they were pleased to note that the consultation involved in preparing the Ashtead NDP had been widespread, with over 600 contributions. The proposals set out in the NDP to protect recreation grounds from possible development were welcomed by the Scrutiny Committee, who felt it should be considered by other areas of the district when preparing their own NDPs. It was also confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee were happy that the Ashtead NDP was compliant with the current Local Plan and it was noted that Ashtead residents would have the opportunity to revise their NDP once the new Local Plan was adopted by the Council.

Councillor Simon Ling paid tribute to the amount of work put in by those residents of Ashtead involved in the creation of the NDP, but also highlighted a potential concern about the emphasis on smaller one and two bedroom houses in the Plan that may lead to property density issues further down the line, which would need careful handling.

RESOLVED:

1. That Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum is notified that Mole Valley District Council is satisfied that the proposed NDP complies with the procedural requirements for preparation and submission of

a Neighbourhood Development Plan as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

2. That the draft Ashtead NDP is published for a six week period, under the provisions of Regulation 16 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
3. That publication of the draft NDP is publicised in a manner which will bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the Ashtead Neighbourhood Area, together with information to advise interested parties where the draft NDP can be inspected, how to make representations and the date by which representations must be submitted. Such publicity to include:
 - Publication of the draft NDP on the Mole Valley District Council website and availability of hard copies in Council offices and local public libraries;
 - Notification of those bodies referred to in the Ashtead NDP Consultation Statement;
 - Notification by letter of all households and businesses in the Ashtead Neighbourhood Area;
 - Working with Ashtead Community Vision to ensure that any other interested parties who have previously engaged with the NDP are also informed.
4. That arrangements are made by MVDC, in consultation with Ashtead Neighbourhood Forum, for the draft Ashtead NDP to be independently examined as soon as possible after the end of the six week publication period.
5. That all representations received during the six week publication period be submitted to the independent examiner of the draft NDP.

12. Infrastructure Needs Assessment

The Executive Member for Planning, Councillor Howard Jones advised that over 2,500 people had responded to the Council's consultation on infrastructure needs in the district. As expected the responses covered a wide range of issues, some of which were the responsibility of the Council and others fell within the remit of partner agencies. Moving forward, the Infrastructure Needs Assessment (INA) would be used to inform a variety of work streams including Transform Leatherhead, the preparation of the new Local Plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

It was highlighted that recommendation 3 as set out in the report had been amended following the Scrutiny Committee meeting and now read as follows:

3. 'To develop a communications and delivery action plan in accordance with the direction set out in paragraphs 1.49-1.60 and subject to consultation with the Exec Member for Planning

The Vice Chairman for the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor David Harper, advised that some members of the Committee were surprised to find issues they were aware of in their own Wards, such as the crossing over the A24 in Ashtead, missing from the INA and questioned whether the INA would be combined with other sources of information. It was also suggest by the Scrutiny Committee that any actions arising from the INA within the remit of the Council should also be related to the Council's Priorities.

It was confirmed that it was the intention for the INA to be a 'living document' which would incorporate new issues and information as it came to light and the Leader of the Council advised that as part of the Action Plan, consideration would be given to a mechanism for incorporating new information as it became available.

The majority of Members present at the meeting shared the same view, that the INA represented an excellent piece of work. It was also encouraging that work undertaken by the Council, such as the forthcoming Dorking Traffic Study and the Parking Review were reflected in the issues raised through the INA.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the results of the Infrastructure Needs Assessment and take them into account in the preparation of the new Local Plan and, in due course, the use of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.
2. To share the results of the Infrastructure Needs Assessment with other infrastructure providers.
3. To develop a communications and delivery action plan in accordance with the direction set out in paragraphs 1.49-1.60 and subject to consultation with the Exec Member for Planning

13. Support for Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign

The Executive Member for Property, Parking & Economic Development, Councillor Charles Yarwood, advised that there had long been cross party agreement against the proposal for a second runway at Gatwick and reports from the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (GACC) had helped to support this position. It was highlighted that there was no other organisation that provided the same level of research as GACC and the grant of £5,000 requested from the Council would be used towards the production of further research into the impact of a second runway.

The Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor David Harper, advised that on the whole the Committee were supportive of GACC, but there had been concern about the transparency of the grants process. The Executive Member for Wellbeing, Councillor Lucy Botting, advised that the Executive would be reviewing the criteria of the Council's Community Grants Scheme to ensure that it was more inclusive.

In response to a question about what the grant would be specifically used for, it was confirmed that GACC would be using the money to undertake research on a variety of different impacts from a second runway, including traffic, noise and pollution studies.

It was also confirmed that contributors to GACC included over 50 Parish Councils, District Councils, private individuals and environmental groups and that GACC were approaching other District and Borough Council's and Environmental Foundations for contributions towards the cost of their research work.

RESOLVED: That a sum of £5,000 is given to the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign, to help them in their campaign against a second runway at Gatwick and to achieve a more satisfactory distribution of flight paths

14. Petition to save the Pilgrim Public House, Station Road, Dorking

The Executive Member for Planning, Councillor Howard Jones advised the Executive that a petition had been received to protect the Pilgrim Public House on Station Road, Dorking from redevelopment. As no planning application had yet been received by the Council on the property, it was proposed that the petition would be logged and fed in to the planning process by Planning Officers in the event of a planning application being received.

Advice had also been given to the petition organisers about how to register the public house as an Asset of Community Value, but to date, no application had been received.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vivienne Michael advised that from a strategic point of view the role of public houses as a community asset, particularly in rural areas would be addressed in the Rural Strategy which was currently being developed and would be brought forward later in the year.

RESOLVED: That the petition to save the Pilgrim Public House in Station Road, Dorking be noted and forwarded to the Development Control Committee to take into consideration in the event of the receipt of an application for planning permission to redevelop the site.

15. Information Item: Amendment to the Membership of the Executive

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vivienne Michael, advised Members that given the scale and scope of the Transform Leatherhead project, it had been decided to allocate an Executive Member solely to this project. As such, with effect from the Council meeting on 12th July 2016, Councillor Howard Jones would become the Executive Member for Transform Leatherhead and Councillor

Duncan Irvine would become the Executive Member for Planning.

16. Information Item: Grass Cutting

The Executive Member for Wellbeing, Councillor Lucy Botting, read the following statement:

Members were provided with an update by email last week regarding the cutting of grass verges in the district. Many of you have responded with thanks and others have provided more information regarding the situation in your wards. I am grateful for that feedback as it helps the officers to prioritise grass cutting operations and improve for next year. Officers have already had those conversations with the Contractors.

Safety on our roads is our top priority and officers have worked with colleagues at Surrey County Council to enable the next round of cutting to be brought forward. From next Monday (27 June) the second round of A24 High Speed cuts will commence. Next week the contractors will work on the area between Capel and the North Holmwood roundabout. They will prioritise areas at Beare Green, where there have been particular concerns from residents about road safety. In the period between 7 and 12 July, they will work on the area between Givons Grove and Burford Bridge. The other areas which require night closures and are not presenting safety concerns will be undertaken later in the month.

We are in the second year of Mole Valley District Council taking responsibility for the grass verge cutting. Both Springs thus far have presented different challenges. In the first year of the contract there were a number of areas of grass that had not been included on the contract specification and were therefore not cut initially. As and when officers learned about these areas, they were added to the contract, and although we are still hearing about some areas that are still missing, there appears to be significantly less than last year. We will continue to listen to our residents who have a good understanding of how verges have been maintained historically in their neighbourhood and are grateful for their feedback.

This year, we had a cold start to the spring followed by intermittent rain and sunshine which has led to significant growth in the last couple of weeks. By bringing forward the next round of cuts, we hope to address this issue.

The cross party group responsible for establishing the new highways verge cutting contract agreed that local residents must have more control over its delivery to ensure that cutting was carried out in a timely and safe way.

Our experience to date is that Parish Councils and Residents Associations are providing more eyes and ears in local areas allowing issues to be identified more quickly and for officer time to be focused on delivering the contracts, with less of a need for site visits. Very often, these bodies have a good understanding of the contract specification and will advise officers if they believe it has not been met. This relationship is working well and enables local residents to ensure they are receiving the right standard of service in their area.

I want to urge PCs and RAs to continue to help us to monitor the contract and to consider what more they can do in the future to assist us in delivering the level of service we all to expect.

In conclusion, we are listening to feedback and using it to inform our future cuts this year and planning our operations for next year. We will continue to work to ensure safety remains a top priority and focus our efforts on ensuring grass is cut in accordance with the feedback and concerns of our residents. Thank you for your patience and I am confident the next round of cuts starting next week will go some way to reassure you that we are doing what we can to address current concerns and learn from events.