

# Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at Pippbrook, Dorking, from 7.00pm to 7.40pm

Present:

Executive Members: Councillors Vivienne Michael (Leader/Chairman), Charles Yarwood (Deputy Leader), Duncan Irvine, Howard Jones and Corinna Osborne-Patterson

Non Executive Members: Margaret Cooksey, Stephen Cooksey, Rosemary Dickson, David Draper, Mary Huggins and Patricia Wiltshire.

## 65. Minutes

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

## 66. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lucy Botting, Lynne Brooks and Michelle Watson.

## 67. Disclosure of Interests

None

## 68. Councillor Question Time

None received.

## 69. Report of the Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee met on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and earlier in the evening of 18<sup>th</sup> April to consider five items that were included on the Executive agenda. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, with the approval of the Leader, undertook to submit feedback on these items to the Executive during their consideration of each report.

Also included on the agenda for the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> March were presentations from representatives of Ride London and Dorking Halls which had been well received. The Dorking Halls presentation was particularly positive and Members were keen to highlight the excellent work of the staff at the venue.

## 70. Refurbishment of Church Gardens, Dorking

During her introduction to the report, the Executive Member for Communities, Services and Housing highlighted that it was proposed to spend £260,000, available within the capital budget for 2016/17, to refurbish six flats owned by MVDC and used for emergency accommodation at Church Gardens, Dorking. The flats were part of a block of 24 units transferred to the Clarion Housing Group during the Housing Stock Transfer in 2007, however MVDC had retained these six units for use as emergency accommodation on a 199 year lease. From a survey of the six flats, it was estimated that the total work required would cost £260,000 and would include replacement kitchens, boilers and rewiring.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee advised that questions had been raised by members of the Committee about the current state of the units and the speed and cost of the repairs, but had been reassured that the project was progressing as planned and had been costed as accurately as possible prior to work commencing.

**RESOLVED:** That capital expenditure of £260,000 to refurbish the six emergency accommodation flats at Church Gardens, Dorking be approved.

## **71. Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

The Executive Member for Planning introduced the report by highlighting that at this stage of the NDP process it was the Council's role to confirm that the work carried out by the Westcott Village Forum to prepare the NDP had met the required standard and as such could proceed to the next stage of consultation. MVDC would have the opportunity to comment on the actual content of the NDP at a later stage in the process.

The Executive Member for Planning confirmed that both he and the officers in the Planning Policy team were satisfied that the Westcott Village Forum had met the statutory requirements in preparing the NDP. As such MVDC would now consult with local the local community, the feedback from which would inform the final version of the Plan that would be submitted to an independent examiner later in the year.

**RESOLVED:** That:-

1. The draft Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan complied with the procedural requirements for preparation and submission as defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
2. The draft Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan be published for a period of not less than six weeks during which people who live, work or carry out business in the Westcott Neighbourhood Area be consulted and given the opportunity to make representations.
3. Arrangements be made for the draft Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan to be independently examined after the end of the consultation period.
4. That all representations received during the consultation be submitted to the examiner.

## **72. Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Enforcement Strategy**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report by highlighting that the Strategy did not signal the start of MVDC's approach to tackling ASB, rather it represented a continuing commitment to enhancing the Council's approach to tackling a range of issues which are of great concern to local communities through making effective use of the new powers available and re-aligning available resources.

The Strategic Objectives detailed in the report reflected all three of the Council's Corporate Priorities namely: our Environment; our Prosperity and Community Well-being and had also been informed by national and county campaigns, strategies and action plans.

Members were informed that the key principles used to guide the Council approach to enforcement were proportionality; consistency; targeting; and transparency. The supporting Action Plan included specific actions designed to:

- Raise awareness of how to report incidents of anti social behaviour; and make it easier to do so
- Inform residents about their responsibilities;
- Improve the Council's ability to record and share data and information to support enforcement activity in partnership with neighbouring authorities and the police; and
- Make better use of our current staff resources to enhance our effectiveness in taking enforcement action.

Following comments raised by the Scrutiny Committee during its consideration of the item, the Executive had improved the content of the strategy to include more detail around noise, dog fouling and bonfires, along with greater detail about Joint Action Groups and Community Incident Action Groups.

The Chairman of Scrutiny Committee confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee had recognised the

importance of the Strategy and it was pleasing to note that comments made at their meeting had been incorporated in the final document. It was agreed that it would be important to inform residents about the need to dispose of their waste responsibly and not use unlicensed third parties who may dispose of it illegally. It was confirmed that there would be a Communications Plan to accompany the Strategy that would include actions to raise awareness amongst residents of the need to dispose of waste responsibly.

As a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) had recently been applied at the Kingston Road Recreation Ground in Leatherhead to tackle anti-social behaviour in that location, it was asked whether further PSPO's could be applied in other areas in the future. It was confirmed that Council Officers were investigating with partner agencies whether there was any requirement for further PSPO's in other parts of the district.

**RESOLVED:** That the Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Enforcement Strategy be adopted and officers instructed to implement the Action Plan.

### **73. Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**

The Executive Member for Communities, Services and Housing advised Members that MVDC had been asked to endorse Surrey County Council's (SCC) Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2017 – 2032. All local authorities in Surrey had been asked to endorse the Strategy and in doing so it would ensure SCC could fulfil their statutory duties as the lead flood authority.

**RESOLVED:** That the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2017-2032 be approved.

### **74. Recommendations of the Planning Enforcement Panel**

The Executive Member for Planning thanked the members of the Planning Enforcement Working Group for their work and endorsed their recommendations, which were felt to be straightforward and designed to improve the efficiency of the Service. One of the recommendations requested that all Councillors are provided with information about ongoing enforcement investigations through the Members Extranet. As the nature of the information provided would be highly sensitive it was agreed that all Members should be reminded of the need to treat the details of ongoing investigations confidentially.

The creation of an additional Planning Enforcement Officer role within the team was welcomed by Members. It was confirmed that although the first recruitment exercise for the role had been unsuccessful, the role was currently being fulfilled by contract staff, while future options were considered.

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendations made by the Planning Enforcement Scrutiny Panel be approved for implementation.

### **75. Recommendations of the Tourist Information Panel**

The Executive Member for Communities, Services and Wellbeing advised that she was grateful to the Tourist Information Panel for its work and felt that it could be fed into the ongoing work to prepare an Economic Prosperity Strategy for Mole Valley.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee explained that two of the Panel's recommendations would need a relatively small amount of expenditure to implement. The first was necessary improvements to the Visit Dorking and Leatherhead websites, which were in need of modernisation. The other was commissioning Visit Surrey to undertake another survey of visitors to Mole Valley in the summer, as it was recognised that the timing of the previous survey in November 2016 was not ideal.

**RESOLVED:** That the recommendations made by the Tourist Information Scrutiny Panel be approved for implementation.

### **76. Establishment of a Discretionary Rate Relief Working Group**

The Leader of the Council advised Members that the Chancellor announced three schemes in the

Spring Budget to help offset large increases in Business Rates as a result of the 2017 revaluation. These schemes would be in addition to the transitional arrangements already in place. Two of the new relief schemes were:-

- A new rate relief scheme for Pubs with a rateable value of below £100,000. Under this scheme, eligible pubs will receive a £1,000 discount on their bill (or the maximum amount of the bill if less than £1,000).
- A scheme of relief for those ratepayers facing large increases as a result of the loss of small business rate relief or rural rate relief.

As the Billing Authority, MVDC had identified the potential beneficiaries of these two schemes and would be contacting these businesses, with revised bills shortly.

The Chancellor had also announced the establishment of a £300m, discretionary fund to support those businesses that faced the steepest increases in their business rates bills as a result of the revaluation. It was intended that every Billing Authority would use their share of the funding to develop their own discretionary relief schemes to deliver targeted support to the most hard pressed ratepayers over a four year period.

It was confirmed that Mole Valley had provisionally been awarded the following:

- £379,000 in 2017/18
- £85,000 in 2018/19
- £35,000 in 2019/20
- £5,000 in 2020/21

The Government had launched a consultation on the design, arrangements and operation of local schemes and MVDC would be devising its own scheme over the coming weeks. To inform the MVDC scheme it was proposed that an Executive Working Group would be set up to consider how the Council could best support local businesses and the local economy with a particular focus on the allocation of a hardship fund.

**RESOLVED:** The Executive agreed that:

1. A Discretionary Rate Relief Working Group be established.
2. That the Working Group comprise five Members as follows – ( 3 Conservatives (one of whom will be the Leader or appropriate portfolio Holder), 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Independent).
3. That the Working Group meets two or three times as necessary.
4. That the Working Group be asked to consider appropriate terms of reference at their first meeting and the Corporate Head of Service with responsibility for Democratic Services in consultation with the Leader be authorised to finalise the terms of reference.