

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday 3rd March 2015 at Pippbrook, Dorking, from 7.00pm to 7.56pm

Present:

Executive Members: Councillors James Friend (Deputy Leader/Chairman), Simon Ling, Vivienne Michael, Paul Newman and John Northcott.

Non-Executive Members: Councillors Margaret Cooksey, Stephen Cooksey and David Preedy.

80. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 3rd February 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman/Leader.

81. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Townsend and Charles Yarwood.

82. Disclosure of Interests

None

83. Councillor Question Time

No questions were received.

84. Report of the Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee met on 24th February and considered a number of reports which were included on the Executive agenda for 3rd March 2015. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, with the approval of the Leader, undertook to submit feedback to the Executive during their consideration of each report. The Committee had also received a presentation from The Landscape Group who had recently been awarded the Council's grounds maintenance, arboricultural and highways horticulture contracts had been invited to the Committee to introduce themselves to Members and to set out their vision for the delivery of the contracts. Overall the Committee was reassured by their plans and understood that the first year of the contract would be a learning experience for both the Council and the Landscape Group, with improvements likely to be seen in subsequent years. The Landscape Group was invited to provide a further update to the Committee in the near future. In another of the series of Service Updates, the Committee had received an update from the Environmental Health Manager, Richard Haddad and Corporate Head of Service, Steve Ruddy, on the work of their team.

85. End of January (Month 10) 2014/15 Budget and Performance Report

The Executive considered a report detailing progress during the year to date with regard to performance indicators and priorities, and the outcome of the monthly budget monitoring exercise for the end of January. The Executive Member for Finance and Corporate Services outlined the budgetary changes since the last reported position to the Executive, including projected underspends on both the revenue and capital budgets.

With regard to performance, the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate Services reported that 18 out of 19 performance indicators were on or above target and one was off target. The Executive Member for Planning congratulated the Development Control Team on achieving the target for the percentage of other applications processed within 8 weeks, and noted that although the direction of travel was still showing that performance had not improved compared to the same period last year, performance had improved markedly in recent months. The Executive Member for Community Engagement and Resident Services highlighted the continued strong performance by the Benefits Team in respect of both relevant performance indicators. She also reported that 101 units of affordable housing would be completed by the end of the financial year, which meant that the three year figure was on target. Finally, the Executive Member for Wellbeing updated the

Executive on the Childhood Obesity seminar which had been held that day. The seminar had been attended by 164 representatives from the Surrey Districts and Boroughs and other organisations and a number of innovative ideas had been discussed.

The Leader of the Opposition asked a number of questions on the report. The Executive Member for Planning confirmed that, in relation to paragraph 2.3, the late year vacancies would be filled and were therefore not ongoing savings, whereas the reduction in expenditure in respect of Transform Leatherhead was an actual saving. The Executive Member for Community Engagement and Resident Services advised that the level of performance in respect of the percentage of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered, as detailed at paragraph 3.17, was expected to continue to be strong. In response to a question relating to capital block sums, officers confirmed that the commitment to capital continued going forwards, and undertook to provide a detailed written response to the Leader of the Opposition. Finally, the Executive Member for Wellbeing confirmed that the information relating to the last Dial a Ride customer satisfaction survey was correct and that a refreshed survey would be undertaken in the near future.

RESOLVED: That the Council's financial and performance position for the end of January (Month 10) 2014/15 be noted.

86. Corporate Strategy 2015-19

The Executive considered the proposed Corporate Strategy 2015-19 which described the vision and priorities for the District over the next four years. A revised Strategy which took account of comments made at the Scrutiny Committee and incorporated a number of small amendments was tabled at the meeting. The Executive noted that the Corporate Strategy had been written so that it was easily accessible to residents, and whilst it was only one page, the priorities therein would be underpinned by the Council's other strategies which would provide greater detail, for example the forthcoming Wellbeing Strategy. Maintaining the balance between the promotion of cycling as a healthy and sustainable activity and the protection of communities from the impact of cycling was a concern to Members, although it was acknowledged that the implementation of the Cycling Strategy sought to achieve this balance. The Executive noted that a monitoring report on this implementation had been prepared and it was agreed that it should be circulated following the meeting.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee noted that most of the Committee's comments had been addressed in the revised Corporate Strategy tabled that evening. The Committee had noted that the survey results didn't necessarily indicate support for some of the priorities under Community Wellbeing, however it was recognised that those residents who might benefit from these services were not necessarily those who would complete a survey. The Chairman also expressed concern that there was no specific reference to the Arts within the Strategy. The Executive Member for Finance and Corporate Services advised that the Strategy had been developed using both the results of the survey and other data and research available. With regards to the specific inclusion of the arts, the Executive Member for Community Engagement and Resident Services reported that arts had not featured highly in the priorities expressed in the survey. It was noted, however, that the Arts were included as part of the Well Being initiatives.

RESOLVED: That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to approve the Corporate Strategy 2015-19, attached at Appendix 1 to these minutes.

87. The Surrey Waste Partnership's Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) - Revision 2 (2015) [KEY DECISION]

The Executive considered a report seeking its endorsement of the Council's adoption of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS). The strategy offered a framework for improving waste and recycling services to the benefit of Mole Valley residents.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee reported that the Committee had expressed concerns with regard to the Performance Indicators (PIs) set out in the Strategy as it seemed to suggest that these would be set by the Surrey Waste Partnership. Members of the Committee had, however, been reassured that most of the PIs would be based upon national targets. Secondly, the Committee had noted with concern the level of detail specifically related to Mole Valley and had agreed that it would

be important to see the detailed Action Plan when it was produced.

The Executive stressed its commitment to the Joint Waste Management Strategy. Executive Members noted that the authority specific operational plan would detail how the actions set out in the overall Strategy would be delivered in Mole Valley.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy be adopted.

88. Surrey Joint Waste Collection Services Contract - Draft Specification [KEY DECISION]

A report detailing progress towards procuring a Joint Waste Collection Services Contract, since the Council signed the Inter Authority Agreement on 26th November 2013, and seeking approval of the Draft Service Specification was considered by the Executive.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee reported a number of concerns from the Committee specifically relating to self monitoring of performance by the contractor and the possibility of bin collections from 6.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Saturday and the consequent disturbance to residents.

The Executive Member for Environment confirmed that self-monitoring was a best practice method, but did not preclude monitoring by the client. Officers would continue to monitor performance, but these were duties of the contract commissioner so were not included in the contract specification. It was reported that the concerns of the Scrutiny Committee with regard to possible working hours had been noted and would be fed back.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That progress on the Joint Waste Collection Services Contract be noted.
- (2) That the Draft Service Specification, attached at Appendix 3 to the report submitted, be approved for use in the procurement of a joint waste contract.

89. Open Spaces Events and Letting Policy

The Executive considered a report setting out an Open Spaces Events and Letting Policy. The key aim of the policy was to motivate and enable communities to participate in the decision making process regarding use of parks and open spaces by devolving decision making to Parish Councils, Residents' Associations or recognised Community Organisations who wished to have that power. The Executive Member for Wellbeing stressed that the policy proposed a differentiated solution for different communities and that if a community did not wish to participate in decision making the Council would continue to make decisions on requests for use of its parks and open spaces.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee expressed his concern about the extension of the policy to all groups and not just democratically elected ones, such as Parish Councils. The Committee had, however, been reassured to note that any group wishing to take up the devolved decision making had to manage their local open spaces in line with the Council's policy.

RESOLVED: That the Open Spaces Events and Letting Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report submitted, be approved.

90. Support for Leith Hill Action Group

The Executive considered a report on a request from the Leith Hill Action Group seeking funding to support their case, at a Public Inquiry, against an application to carry out exploratory drilling for oil near Coldharbour. The Executive noted the fund raising undertaken by the Action Group in respect of their campaign thus far.

RESOLVED: That a sum of £5,000 be given to the Leith Hill Action Group to help them in their campaign against an application to carry out exploratory drilling for oil near Coldharbour.