

# Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at Pippbrook, Dorking, from 7.00pm to 7.52pm

Present:

Executive Members: Councillors James Friend (Leader/Chairman), Lucy Botting, Lynne Brooks, Howard Jones, Vivienne Michael, Paul Newman, Corinna Osborne-Patterson, Sarah Seed and Charles Yarwood.

Non-Executive Members: Councillors Margaret Cooksey, Stephen Cooksey, David Draper, Simon Ling and John Northcott.

## 22. Minutes

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader/Chairman.

## 23. Apologies for Absence

None.

## 24. Disclosure of Interests

None.

## 25. Councillor Question Time

(1) Councillor Stephen Cooksey asked the following question:

“Would the Executive Member for Town Centres provide a progress report on the Meadowbank Football Stadium project including a statement on whether a satisfactory arrangement has been agreed with both Dorking senior football clubs and whether an assurance can be given that the project will be completed within the original timeframe?”

Councillor Howard Jones, Executive Member for Town Centres, responded as follows:

Work is progressing in accordance with the decision of the Executive on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

[The meeting adjourned at 7.04pm and reconvened at 7.06pm.]

## 26. Report of the Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee met on 15<sup>th</sup> September and considered a number of items which were included on the Executive agenda for 29<sup>th</sup> September 2015. 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.

The Committee had also considered a review of the complaints received by the Council during 2014–2015, and the Vice-Chairman was pleased to advise that the number of complaints received had decreased in comparison with previous years. Overall the Committee had been satisfied that the Council had robust procedures in place for handling complaints. In addition, the Committee had reviewed a draft version of the Wellbeing Strategy which would be considered by the Executive at its October meeting. The Committee had been content with the report, subject to some additional information being included within the Strategy, and looked forward to seeing the final version at its next meeting. Finally, the Vice-Chairman reported that the Committee had considered an urgent item on Surrey County Council’s consultation on its Community Recycling Centres. He advised that Members had expressed strong views on this item and the Committee had recommended that the Council should indicate within its response that none of the proposed options would be acceptable. The Vice-Chairman sought confirmation from the Executive Member that the view of the Scrutiny

Committee had been incorporated into the Council's response.

## **27. Business Planning and Budget 2016/17 - Scene Setting**

The Executive considered a report which set out the starting context and process for Business and Budget planning in 2016/17.

The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee reported that the Committee had been apprehensive about the possibility of borrowing funds to meet the Council's objectives. Although it was understood that a strict criteria based upon the rate of return from an investment and the value for money for council tax payers would be used, the Committee felt that any decision would require careful thought given that Mole Valley District Council had been debt free for many years.

The Executive Member for Finance and Performance confirmed that there would be no depletion of capital reserves for at least the next 18 months and any future borrowing would be based on an investment model.

Councillor Simon Ling queried why the list of projects set out at paragraph 1.11 of the report submitted did not include the allotments site in North Leatherhead. He also referred to Surrey's Local Government Pension Fund and questioned to what extent the 'stabilisation' policy had exacerbated the likely 2016 deficit.

The S151 Officer advised that no project in respect of the allotments site was included in the budget proposals as until the planning framework allowed housing development on the site nothing could go ahead. With regard to the Pension Fund, the S151 Officer reported that the stabilisation policy had added £70,000-80,000 to the cost pressures, and this cost pressure was likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

In response to a question regarding the opportunity Members would have to discuss any decision on moving from a debt-free authority to a borrowing authority, Councillor Stephen Cooksey was advised that any proposals would go through the usual budget setting process with the Standing Budget Panel considering initial proposals and Council approving the final budget following recommendation from the Executive. It was also noted that the capital block sums detailed in Appendix A to the report were taken from the long-term financial model.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Scene Setting report as the starting context for the Business and Budget planning process 2016/17 be noted.
- (2) That the forthcoming Business and Budget planning process for 2016/17 be endorsed.

## **28. Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2015**

The Draft Statement of Community Involvement to replace the existing SCI was considered by the Executive.

The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee advised that the Committee had questioned whether the MyAlerts system which could be used by residents to receive notification of new planning applications in their local area could be adapted to include notifications by Ward boundaries. Officers had advised that although this option wasn't available at present, it was something that could be looked into in the future. The Committee had also noted that the provision of site notices would be extended to include all householder applications and had questioned whether this was necessary as neighbours were already notified. Finally the Committee had questioned what would happen if it was discovered that an applicant had not displayed their site notice?

In response to the question at Scrutiny Committee regarding the extension of site notices to all householder applications, the Executive Member for Planning proposed that two options be

included in the consultation document. Option A would be that site notices would be displayed for all applications, as proposed on page 10 of the draft SCI, and Option B would be the current policy. The Executive agreed that both options should be included in the draft SCI for consultation.

With regard to notifications via MyAlerts, Members noted that residents were able to set their own notification distances with current options being 100m, 200m and 500m.

**RESOLVED:** That the Draft Statement of Community Involvement 2015 be approved for consultation, subject to the inclusion of two options for site notices on page 10 of the SCI: Option A, as drafted on page 10 and Option B, the current policy relating to site notices.

## **29. Application by Capel Parish Council to designate a Neighbourhood Area**

Following the decision at its previous meeting to delegate authority to the Corporate Head of Planning, in consultation with the relevant Executive Members, to determine the application by Capel Parish Council to designate the parish as a Neighbourhood Area, the Executive considered a report on the outcome of the application.

The Executive Member for Planning reported that some of the responses to the consultation related to how the three distinct villages of Capel, Beare Green and Coldharbour would be recognised and how representative the Parish Council was. She advised that the Parish Council had already taken steps to reassure local people that the different characteristics of the three villages would be recognised in the Neighbourhood Plan and that equal representation would be given to all parts of the Parish. The Leader concurred in the concerns of the residents, encouraged the Parish Council to ensure that a Plan supported by all three communities was developed, and abstained from the decision in respect of this item.

**RESOLVED:** That the decision to designate the Capel (parish wards of Beare Green, Capel and Coldharbour) Neighbourhood Area be noted.

## **30. West Street, Dorking – Public Art Project**

The Executive considered a proposal for a public art project in West Street, Dorking to complement the recent enhancement of the area.

The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee reported that Members had expressed differing views with regard to the funding of the project, with some suggesting that private investment should also be sought. Members had also noted that developer contributions were often time limited and had questioned whether there was any risk of the funding for the project expiring. Despite the differing views over funding, the Committee had welcomed the proposed project as a boost to the West Street shopping area and a demonstration of the Council's support for local traders.

The Executive Member for Planning confirmed that there was sufficient Planning Infrastructure Contributions funding to cover the costs of the project and advised that a proportion of the funding would expire on or before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

Executive Members supported the project and agreed that the final design would be brought back before the Executive at an appropriate date to receive its endorsement.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That a work of public art in West Street, as described in the report submitted, be agreed at a cost not exceeding £32,000.
- (2) That funding for the project be provided from the Planning Infrastructure Contributions for Dorking.
- (3) That final approval of the designs for the project be delegated to the Corporate Head of

Service, in consultation with the Executive Members for Town Centres and Planning, following consultation with the project group referred to in paragraphs 1.8 and 1.9 of the report.

**31. Migrating the ICT systems to the Surrey County Council Shared Data Centre**

The Executive considered the options for migrating storage and appropriate infrastructure into the Shared Surrey Data Centre in order to increase resilience, reduce office space demand and maximise future partnership working opportunities.

The Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee reported that following reassurance from officers regarding addressing possible teething problems, the Committee had recognised that the proposal set out in the report would provide the Council with additional resilience and that the recommended blended model offered the best value for money.

**RESOLVED:** That Option 2 to migrate the ICT application workload to the Share Surrey Data Centre in order to deliver savings and to secure improved resilience of service availability and future opportunities in service delivery be adopted.

**32. Business Rate Discretionary Rate Relief – Charity Shop**

The Executive considered an appeal from the British Heart Foundation against a decision to refuse top up discretionary rate relief. Members noted that charity shops already received mandatory business rate relief amounting to 80% of the charge due.

**RESOLVED:** That the application for discretionary rate relief be refused in accordance with Option 4 of the report submitted.