

## Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at Pippbrook, Dorking from 7.00pm to 9.04pm

Present: Councillors Simon Ling (Chairman), Raj Haque (Vice Chairman), Lucy Botting, Lynne Brooks, John Chandler, Margaret Cooksey, Stephen Cooksey, Mary Cooper, Joe Crome, Rosemary Dickson, David Draper, Simon Edge, Paul Elderton, James Friend, David Hawksworth, Mary Huggins, Chris Hunt, Duncan Irvine, Howard Jones, Bridget Kendrick, Paul Kennedy, Malcolm Ladell, Tim Loretto, Claire Malcomson, Vivienne Michael, David Mir, Wayne Monkman, Paul Newman, Corinna Osborne-Patterson, Jatin Patel, Paul Potter, Peter Stanyard, Michelle Watson, Clayton Wellman, Patricia Wiltshire and Charles Yarwood.

### 29. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 30. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Ashton, David Harper, Metin Huseyin, John Mugeridge and Sarah Seed

### 31. Disclosure of Interests

Councillors Margaret Cooksey, Stephen Cooksey, David Draper, Mary Huggins and Michelle Watson declared non-pecuniary interests in Item 6 as members of the Friends of Dorking Halls scheme.

Councillor Paul Kennedy declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 5/2017 as a member of Bookham Choral Society and Horsley Choral Society who had used the Surrey Performing Arts Library facility.

Councillor Claire Malcomson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 5/2017 as performer who had previously used the Surrey Performing Arts Library facility.

### 32. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that since the previous Council meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017 he had attended 50 engagements, a highlight of which was the parade along Dorking High Street organised to bid farewell to Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre, which was moving from its current location at Headley Court to elsewhere in the country. The Chairman passed on his thanks to the Council Officers who been involved in arranging the event and making it such a success.

It was confirmed that a Christmas Concert would be held on 7<sup>th</sup> December at the Ashted Peace Memorial Hall, a Charity Dinner would be held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at the Fetcham Tandoori and a Charity Quiz would be held at St Johns School in Leatherhead on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

### 33. Recommendations of Committees

#### Audit Committee - 21st September 2017- Treasury Management – Annual Report & Prudential Indicators 2016/2017

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor Paul Kennedy, introduced the report which had been considered by the Committee at its meeting on 21st September 2017. During the introduction it was confirmed that there had been no breaches of the Council's agreed Strategy and the in-house team had operated within the Prudential Indicators set by the Council.

The report of the Audit Committee also confirmed that Mole Valley District Council's in-house team together with some externally managed funds had achieved a rate of return on

investments of 1.61%. The Council achieved an overall return of £378,614 in 2016/17 approximately £69,000 below budget. Investment balances at balance sheet dates decreased from £21.47m (31/03/16) to £17.542m (31/03/17). The 2016/17 financial year continued the challenging environment of previous years with low investment returns and continuing counterparty risk.

The Leader of the Council extended the thanks of the Executive to the Audit Committee for monitoring and scrutinising the indicators for last year. Highlighting that it was pleasing to note that there were no breaches of the agreed Treasury Management Strategy and the Council's funds were managed in line with the limits set.

**Resolved:**

1. That the Treasury Management Annual Outturn report for 2016/17 be noted.
2. That the actual Prudential Indicators reported for 2016/17, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be approved.

(NB. Counted vote 35 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention)

**34. Maintenance Work, Dorking Halls**

The Council considered the report set out at pages 21 to 26 of the agenda which requested approval to proceed with external maintenance work at Dorking Halls. The Executive Member for Assets and Investments introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

In his introduction to the report, Councillor Charles Yarwood, advised that the allocation of £270,000 had been requested from the 2018/19 budget to undertake the planned, essential maintenance at Dorking Halls. The work had been planned to ensure efficiencies could be achieved from only needing to hire scaffolding once.

There was support across the Chamber for the recommendation with it felt to be important for the Council to maintain its major assets such as Dorking Halls to prevent increased costs further down the line. A concern was expressed about the nature of the work and whether it had been foreseen. In response it was confirmed that the work proposed was part of an ongoing maintenance plan for the venue. It was also confirmed that the type of materials used in the work would be investigated to ensure the maximum lifespan of any improvements was achieved.

**Resolved:** That approval be given to proceed with the proposed external maintenance works to Dorking Halls

(NB. Counted vote 35 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention)

**35. Capel (Parish Wards of Beare Green, Capel and Coldharbour) Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The Council considered the report set out at pages 27 to 78 of the agenda (along with a separately circulated Annex) setting out details in respect of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for the Capel Parish. The Executive Member for Planning introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

In his introduction to the report, Councillor Duncan Irvine provided Members with a brief overview of the process to date, noting that some of the more ambitious content of the Capel NDP relating to certain sites being put forward for development, had been removed from the final document on the recommendation of the Examiner who had proposed a number of amendments, all of which had been accepted by the organisers of the NDP, namely Capel Parish Council. It was also noted that there would be other more suitable opportunities within the Local Plan process to bring forward the sites removed from the Capel NDP for development.

Providing the recommendations were accepted by the Council, the next step in the process would be to proceed to the referendum stage, which would be held in November 2017. Provided the referendum yielded a positive response of greater than 50% of the vote, MVDC would then be obliged to make the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It would then become part of the development plan for Mole Valley whereby it would be given significant weight during the determination of future planning applications.

It was recognised that a tremendous amount of work had been undertaken locally and all Members congratulated the Capel Neighbourhood Forum on the work that it had done.

**RESOLVED:**

That:-

1. The recommendations set out in the examiner's report dated 28 June 2017 be agreed.
2. The Capel Neighbourhood Development Plan be modified in accordance with the examiner's recommendations.
3. A decision statement confirming that MVDC is satisfied that the Capel Neighbourhood Development Plan, as amended, meets the basic conditions be published.
4. Arrangements be made for a referendum to be held on the Capel Neighbourhood Development Plan.
5. If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote in favour, MVDC will proceed to make the Capel Neighbourhood Development Plan.

**36. Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The Council considered the report set out at pages 79 to 138 of the agenda setting out details in respect of the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Westcott. The Executive Member for Planning introduced the report and proposed the recommendations.

In his introduction to the report, Councillor Duncan Irvine provided Members with a brief overview of the process to date. If the Council agreed to proceed to the referendum stage, this would be held in November 2017. Provided the referendum yielded a positive response of greater than 50% of the vote, MVDC would then be obliged to make the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It would then become part of the development plan for Mole Valley whereby it would be given significant weight during the determination of future planning applications.

It was recognised that a tremendous amount of work had been undertaken locally and all Members congratulated the Westcott Neighbourhood Forum on the work that it had done.

**RESOLVED:**

That:-

1. The recommendations set out in the examiner's report dated 31 July 2017 be agreed.
2. The Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan be modified in accordance with the examiner's recommendations.
3. A decision statement confirming that MVDC is satisfied that the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan, as amended, meets the basic conditions be published.
4. Arrangements be made for a referendum to be held on the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan.

5. If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote in favour, MVDC will proceed to make the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan.

### **37. Appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Council considered the report set out at pages 139 to 140 of the agenda which set out the process for appointing members of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Leader of the Council introduced the report and proposed the recommendation.

During the introduction, it was noted that MVDC had a duty to review the allowances paid to its Members every four years, to ensure that they were at an appropriate level to not deter local people from standing for election to the Council for financial reasons and also to recognise the time commitment expected of Members with special responsibilities.

As part of the review, the Council was required to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel which would take a detailed look at Members Allowances, including meeting with a number of Councillors to discuss their respective roles, before making recommendations. Any recommendations arising from the Independent Remuneration Panel would be reported back to the Council in February, to coincide with consideration of the Budget for 2018/2019.

An Independent Remuneration Panel must comprise a minimum of three members. By approving the recommendation it would enable Officers to begin the process of identifying potential Panel Members.

**Resolved:** That the Corporate Head of Service with responsibility for Democratic and Legal Services, be authorised to appoint the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

### **38. Leader's Statement**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Vivienne Michael made the following statement:

'When I travel round the country I'm sometimes asked exactly where is Mole Valley. When I mention Dorking and Leatherhead, the penny usually drops – I'm sure some of you have experienced something similar. What strikes me when I get back home is how very different things are in Mole Valley itself. People here have a very strong sense of identity and attachment to the District, a desire to preserve all that we love about it but also to make it fit for the 21st century, our children and grandchildren. And people are increasingly prepared to take action to help achieve this.

We've seen this tonight in the fact that two more Neighbourhood Development Plans have passed their independent examination. This Council worked closely with the communities in Westcott, Capel, Beare Green and Coldharbour as they prepared their plans but the plans are driven by the communities themselves.

We've seen how much our residents care about the future of Mole Valley in the exceptionally high response to the first of our Local Plan consultations with over 7,500 people viewing the Future Mole Valley video and 5,500 visiting the website – the highest response we've received to any consultation to date. The Administration is committed to continuing to work with local communities during the next stages in the preparation of the new Plan.

The sense of community and the pride people have in the history and heritage of Mole Valley were also very much in evidence during our annual Heritage Open Days weekend when volunteers across the District came together to put on over 70 events that were enjoyed by more residents and visitors than ever before.

The District-wide Arts Alive programme, which is bigger and better than ever this year, is another annual initiative supported by this Council but driven by the community.

At a more local level, the Council has invested approximately £60,000 on repairing and organising the use of the North Leatherhead Community Centre by the community so that

today, it is used for events ranging from discos to bingo nights and by groups ranging from the Brownies to the British Legion. To my mind this is one of the best examples of what can be achieved when we act to facilitate and support community action and, as recently agreed by the Executive in September, we are continuing our support to help secure a more sustainable future for the Centre.

But, the Council also has to show leadership. And there's no better demonstration of that than Transform Leatherhead where, having engaged with local communities, we are now taking the lead in delivering the changes they want to see. We have acquired key properties in the town and we are now moving forward with plans to improve and develop these investments. The proposed improvements to the Swan Centre car park have been widely welcomed and that is just a start - there are more transformational changes to come.

The Executive recently agreed funding for a planning application for the redevelopment of Clare House and James House, replacing these uninspiring office blocks with new homes and a café and an enhanced riverside amenity area – something we know residents want to see.

In Dorking, we will shortly be bringing forward proposals to create a Master Plan, one that will unlock the potential of the Pippbrook and Reigate Road Car Park sites. We want to see a sustainable and landmark regeneration that will benefit and enhance the whole town centre.

We are doing all this in what continues to be an extremely challenging financial climate and I am proud that prudent financial management by this Conservative Administration means that we have not only succeeded in protecting front line services but have been able to invest in projects such as these as well as making more funds available for key areas such as tackling homelessness.

This year we are facing new challenges as Surrey County Council consults on a range of cost cutting proposals which are feeding through to the delivery of services in Mole Valley. I am very clear about the important role we have to play in this.

We don't accept that the Districts and Boroughs can simply step in to plug the funding gaps – only those with the most tenuous grasp on economic reality, a cavalier disregard of taxpayer's money - or possibly in search of an easy headline - could put this forward as a realistic option.

What we can do is ensure that County is aware of the real impact of their proposals on our residents and work constructively with them to identify solutions. We lobbied hard to save the Dorking CRC and we are continuing to work with County on the future of that facility.

We have liaised with Parish Councils and Residents Associations to seek local solutions to County's proposed highways maintenance cuts and lobbied County for the local flexibility needed as they negotiate new contracts going forward.

And we are adopting the same constructive approach to explore ways of retaining the Performing Arts Library service. We are committed to speaking up for our residents in these difficult times and we are well placed to do so.

Finally, I'd like to warmly welcome Karen Brimacombe as our new Chief Executive. Karen brings a wealth of experience of local government and the health sector and I'm sure I can speak for everyone here when I say that am very much looking forward to working with her.'

## **39. Reports of Executive Members**

Councillor Lucy Botting (Executive Member for Wellbeing)

The Executive Member for Wellbeing updated Council on the following:

Wellbeing Prescription

Mole Valley's 12 month pilot Wellbeing Prescription Scheme in partnership with Tandridge and Reigate and Banstead went live on the 8th May at the 4 selected medical practices - Medwyn Medical Practice in Dorking, Brockwood Medical Practice in North Holmwood, Ashlea Medical Practice (Linden House) in Leatherhead and Molebridge Medical Practice in Fetcham and North Leatherhead.

Our fulltime Wellbeing Advisor works one day each week in each of the practices in order to reduce existing pressure on GP's and provide support and advice to patients who would benefit from non-clinical intervention.

In the first 20 weeks of the pilot we have had 316 referrals for a wide variety of reasons, the most common of which has been for weight management followed by low level mental health and social isolation.

After the 12 month pilot we are aiming to secure future funding from the CCG in order to continue and expand the service to other medical practices in the district.

### Community Transport

Work is underway to further engage with our core users and an initial forum meeting was held in early September. This was attended by service users and the Grange Centre to discuss how the service worked for them. Building on the successful start the next forum takes place at the Grange Centre on the 16th October.

The service is currently trialling the new Shoppa service which started on the 2nd October. Targeting various locations throughout the week, the service takes users to their local supermarket. As well as the practical benefits of this initiative, it is aimed at alleviating social isolation and allow users to meet one another and build relationships over time.

### Community Safety

Over 250 people completed the Meadowbank Recreation Ground Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) consultation and 70% believed that the introduction of a PSPO would have a positive impact on anti-social drinking. In addition, 65% of respondents considered having a PSPO to regulate dog fouling was a good idea, and 71% wanted restricted dog access into the gated playground.

Following these results the PSPO will be implemented on 20th October 2017 in conjunction with the expiration of the existing Dorking and Leatherhead Town Centre Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs) and their transfer to PSPOs. New signage will be put in place at Meadowbank and the existing DPPO signs in Dorking and Leatherhead will be replaced with PSPO signs.

### Surrey Performing Arts Library

I have commented on the consultation regarding changing the Surrey Performing Arts Library service and moving out of its current location in Denbies Wine Estate. I expressed the Council's concern that this valuable service could be lost and specifically that the historical link with our District could be severed. I have asked that Surrey County Council engage with Mole Valley District Council with a view to looking at options to maintain this valuable service within the area. I await a response.

### Councillor Corinna Osborne-Patterson (Executive Member for Communities, Services and Housing )

The Executive Member for Communities, Services and Housing updated Council on the following:

#### Housing

The Housing team has now achieved eight out of the ten challenges needed to be awarded the National Practitioners Gold Standard for services for homeless people. Mole Valley currently holds Silver status and remains one of only 12 authorities nationwide to be awarded this level and the only one in Surrey. We are awaiting the outcome of the ninth challenge. To achieve the 10th challenge and the ultimate Gold Standard the Council needs to achieve for at least 12 months no families living in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks.

### Customer Service

A total of six frontline services have now achieved Customer Service Excellence accreditation with two more working towards assessment in the New Year. At Mole Valley, we are using this as a tool for improvement, and to recognise the high levels of customer service that we know we deliver.

### Communications

Our monthly e-newsletter continues to reach a growing audience, 16 editions have been published with approximately 9,200 subscribers. The newsletter has an average open rate of 41.3 % compared with an industry average of 21.6%. 11.1% of our subscribers click on a link within the newsletter for further information (compared with an industry average of 2.2%).

The website has retained its 4 star rating from SOCITM and also received a SOCITM Better Connected Award for 'Best Council Website for Search and Navigation'. 6 Councils received this award, not bad when you consider there are over 400 in contention.

### Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017, and will place increased duties on local housing authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness. It will amend the current duties under the Housing Act 1996.

The changes will not come into effect immediately as councils will need time to prepare. The government has confirmed that the Act will commence from 1 April 2018, with a new Code of Guidance being issued later this year.

The Act transforms the help councils are expected to provide to all homeless people. It aims to ensure provision of new support to people who aren't entitled to help under the current system. Councils are required to try and prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place, intervening early and encouraging other public sector bodies to actively assist in identifying and referring those at risk of homelessness.

In November the Scrutiny Committee will be considering the progress towards the action plan identified in the Homelessness Strategy and a decision will be taken by Executive on some proposed amendments to the Housing Allocations Scheme, principally driven by the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

## **40. Questions to Members of the Executive**

(1) The following question was submitted by Councillor Michelle Watson:

"As we know Elmbridge was the first to go live with the joint waste services and it didn't go too well by all accounts.

What steps are being taken to ensure that the same problem Elmbridge had doesn't happen in Mole Valley?

Will the dashboard mapping system work, tracking devices and cameras work on the bin lorries. Will the staff that get moved over see a wage reduction?"

Councillor David Mir responded as follows:

“The initial issues with service delivery in Elmbridge have been resolved, and performance is now at the same level as it was under the previous contractor, although performance is not yet at the level agreed in the contract. Joint Waste Solutions and Amey are working together to secure further performance improvement. Amey have brought in additional supervisory staff to improve the accuracy of collections and improve crew productivity.

A lot of hard work was put into ensuring that the problems in Elmbridge did not repeat when the contract started in Woking last month, where the service has got off to an excellent start. Lessons learned will continue to be used ahead of rolling out the contract in Surrey Heath in February and Mole Valley in August.

The in cab technology is being used in Woking and is working well. These devices allow the crews to log their progress and report any issues in real time. This means that if a resident reports a missed bin, they will get up to date information about whether the crew have visited their road yet, and if they have, why their bin hasn't been emptied.

Staff will transfer to Amey on existing terms and conditions in line with TUPE legislation”.

(2) The following question was submitted by Councillor Michelle Watson:

“With the Joint Waste Contract providing a significant saving of 1.3 million a year. What discussions have been had to explore the possibility for Mole Valley Council assisting with the running costs of Ranmore Recycling Centre for a minimum 5 days a week?

I don't believe the decision made by Surrey County Council is a positive move for our residents because it will significantly increase the waiting time at the Ranmore Recycling Centre. Will Mole Valley District Council consider taking action if the Recycling Centre becomes dangerous to use due to the reduced opening times?”

Councillor David Mir responded as follows:

“At the last meeting on 11 July, Council debated a motion about the Community Recycling Centres consultation. At the time of the debate, Dorking CRC, plus three others in Surrey were proposed to be closed. Council agreed that it and I quote:

- opposes all of these measures but in particular strongly opposes the proposed closure of the Ranmore Road Tip and will take all possible action to persuade the County Council not to take this action; and
- resolves, as a matter of urgency, to bring forward positive options that would retain the Dorking CRC and reasonable opening hours at Leatherhead

Following the meeting of the Council, myself and the Leader of the Council jointly wrote to Councillor Mike Goodman to set out the Council's case for not closing the Dorking CRC. We strongly outlined the Council's concerns about the impact on residents of Dorking, Westcott, and the whole of the southern part of the District. Mole Valley would have been disproportionately affected by the proposed changes. We followed this up by meeting Councillor Goodman personally to present our case for retaining CRC provision at Dorking.

Cllr Goodman was sympathetic to the arguments that we had made in our response to the consultation, and explained that as a result of the response to the consultation, he had requested that officers and the contractor look at alternatives to retain service provision at Dorking CRC and the other three that were proposed for closure. Surrey's Cabinet has agreed that Dorking CRC remains open for three days a week. All of us would like the facility to remain open for six days a week, as it is at the moment, or even seven. However, Surrey County Council have huge financial pressures and have to make savings. I believe that our lobbying to retain service provision at Dorking should be considered as very successful for our residents. We are also fortunate that we have such a significant facility at Leatherhead, which not all Surrey Districts and Boroughs have in their areas.

The savings achieved through the procurement of the Joint Waste Contract have already been built into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and the four year Efficiency Plan that was submitted to Government last year."

Councillor Michelle Watson asked the following supplemental question:

"Has MVDC considered and budgeted for an increase in fly-tipping that will happen across the district, as well as an increase in enforcement time and clean-up costs that may be incurred? Would it be possible for Surrey County Council to put up signage to state the queue times that will occur around the Ranmore Road site to minimise the danger from excessive use from shortened opening times?"

Councillor David Mir replied as follows:

"We are still conducting talks with the County Councillor Mike Goodman in an effort to improve the situation. In regard to flytipping, at present there is no evidence that it has increased, but it will continue to be monitored. Signage would be a Surrey Highways issue and not something this Council is responsible for."

(3) The following question was submitted by Councillor Margaret Cooksey:

"What level of funds have been raised as a consequence of the introduction of CIL in Mole Valley earlier this year; Have any allocations of these funds been made or are any proposed to be made and if so can a list be provided?"

Councillor Duncan Irvine responded as follows:

"CIL receipts collected so far total £44,401. As expected, the rate of collection has been slow in the first nine months as extant permissions granted before introduction of CIL are built out. However, we expect the rate of collection to rise in future months. An indication of this are receipts due (demand notices issued but not yet collected) which total £247,657.95, and potential CIL liability (total liability notices issued) of £1,412,072.73. This latter figure needs to be treated with caution as it includes developments that are entitled to exemptions and reliefs from CIL, or may not be commenced. Members may be interested to know that the Council has successfully defended its first CIL appeal, which sought to avoid liability on a development.

No CIL funds have been allocated to date. It is necessary to accrue a meaningful sum before CIL receipts can be allocated. The first anniversary of the introduction of CIL in Mole Valley is on 1 January 2018 and a report on CIL will be presented to the first Executive meeting in the New Year on 6th February 2018."

Councillor Margaret Cooksey asked the following supplemental question:

"What system do we have in place for collecting the money that has yet to be paid and is outstanding?"

Councillor Duncan Irvine agreed to provide a written response to the supplementary question (See Appendix 2).

(4) The following question was submitted by Councillor Stephen Cooksey:

"Since July this year the shop vacancy rate in Dorking Town Centre has stood at 7.3%, the highest level since July 2013, four years ago, What action is Mole Valley Council taking to reduce this rate by assisting and encouraging retail businesses that may wish locate in Dorking Town Centre?"

Councillor Simon Edge responded as follows:

"The Council is actively working to facilitate economic prosperity across the District. This includes retail prosperity in Dorking.

Members will be aware that the Council is currently developing an Economic Prosperity Strategy and this will include a priority around encouraging investment in the District including the town centres which was something Members identified as a priority at the Economic Prosperity Workshop we held earlier this year. I am keen we set up a Business Enquiries System to enable a more efficient and effective means to attract the kind of business including retailers that will thrive in our district. Also that we develop an Economic Monitoring Report to track progress of a number of prosperity indicators across the District and within the major business centres.

Specific to Dorking, I would like to remind members that the Council helped establish the Dorking BID which became operational on 1st July. Myself and Cllr Cooksey attended a BID forum style meeting last week, and both of us will serve on the BID Board. The BID's stated objective is to attract investment into Dorking town which will complement this Council's priority of wanting to achieve a vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages. With this in mind we will be bringing forward a proposal later this month to examine the potential use of the Council's property assets on the Pippbrook campus and at the rear of the Dorking Halls that has the potential to stimulate the regeneration of the east end of Dorking High Street.

In addition to the BID, Cllr Cooksey will be aware that the Council also supports the Dorking Members Group to ensure they are kept up to date with what is happening in the town. Other Dorking focused groups such as the Dorking Town Forum and the Dorking Co-Ordinators Group are also supported with attendance and information. These various forms of support enable Dorking members and businesses to play their own active part in assisting and encouraging retail businesses that may wish to locate in Dorking Town Centre. Indeed it was at the Dorking Members' Group meeting that the regularly reported vacancy rate referred to in your question was provided.

The October 2017 vacancy rate for Dorking Town Centre is indeed 7.3% which compares well to the national rate of over 12%. Dorking still enjoys one of the lowest vacancy rates in the country. I was encouraged by the BID's forum discussion where local business people both recognised and celebrated this fact, and also that they were committed to doing more, as the Council is, to build on this position. The business community understands that it is natural to have a turnover of shops and the introduction of new retailers to the town which is a function of a healthy market economy. We can see this happening in Dorking with the number of shops that are currently being refurbished, refitted and repurposed which will come on stream shortly.

It is clear to me that there are a number of really successful and vibrant businesses in Dorking including the additions of the Dorking Butchery and the new Fruit and Vegetable shop and there are many others besides. That is not to say that there is not more that can be done, and as I have explained in this response, we are actively engaged in doing that. Many high streets in the country are struggling but Dorking remains an attractive and vibrant place for residents and visitors to spend their money – and we should celebrate this fact.”

Councillor Stephen Cooksey asked the following supplemental question:

“When Dorking had a Town Centre Manager there was in place a business enquiry system, which no longer exists. Would it be possible to re-establish this as quickly as possible? Is the use of the national comparator of 12% reasonable given that it includes northern towns and seaside resorts that have much higher vacancy rates and could a comparator against other local towns be used to give a more accurate reflection on the performance of Dorking?”

Councillor Simon Edge replied as follows:

“I envisage that the business enquiry system I am discussing with officers would replicate the system previously used by the Town Centre Manager.

The national rate by definition includes the whole country, but I don't think that makes this figure invalid. When we receive the forthcoming Economic Monitoring report we will be able to provide County-wide and local comparisons such as Councillor Cooksey has suggested.”

(5) The following question was submitted by Councillor Claire Malcomson:

“What representations has the Council made to Epsom and St Helier in relation to its current 'population engagement exercise' on future options for its hospitals including Epsom Hospital?”

Councillor Lucy Botting responded as follows:

“Firstly, we are an engagement party and not a direct influencer. The ultimate decision will be made by NHS England and the Secretary of State.

This affects me from both a professional point of view, as a Director of Nursing and also within the local health economy in my role as an Executive Member. From a professional point of view I have been involved in these issues for many years with conversations between Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group going towards Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group. From my Executive Member perspective I attend the Health Liaison Panel hosted by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council which has been discussing issues relating to the Epsom & St Helier sites and the move towards one major acute hospital and one community type establishment.

Equally this model affects the north of the District of which I am a Ward Councillor. I have been in discussions with the Bookham Residents Association, County Councillor Tim Hall, the Surrey County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Members and the Leatherhead Residents Association. To that end we have organised an engagement event in Fetcham Park House on 19<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30am where we will be able to pull together the various conversations and update attendees on where we are in regard to the consultation exercise.

Specifically in relation to the recent engagement exercise, I submitted comments which are on MOSS for Members to read.

The process is about understanding patient flow and patient need; it is not about providing the same old services which needs to be made clear, instead it is about ensuring the health service is future proofed going forward. Members need to be aware that we have seen a reduction already in services, such as Mental Health Services which have moved to the Ashford & St Peters NHS Foundation Trust last year and a reduction in stroke services with the new main site located with Ashford and St Peters as well. If you look at our Accident and Emergency unit at Epsom Hospital, it only caters for medical emergencies, not surgical emergencies which go to St Helier. If you call an ambulance in Mole Valley, it will take you to the closest Accident and Emergency department, which in Bookham tends to be either the Royal Surrey Hospital in Guildford or Epsom Hospital.”

Councillor Claire Malcomson asked the following supplemental question:

“Can the Executive put the opinion of local residents to the 2020 – 2030 scheme, because they are very concerned about services moving to St Helier hospital?”

Councillor Lucy Botting replied as follows:

“We have engaged with local residents, including both the Bookham and Leatherhead Residents Associations. We have a residents engagement event last week and another event on 19<sup>th</sup> October which have been well publicised. We will be supporting our residents, but it is not about losing our hospital, instead we need to think carefully about what we need as a population.”

(6) The following question was submitted by Councillor Mary Huggins:

“The Executive Member has advised us that together with the officer leads, he is putting in place measures to improve the Development Management team's performance and streamline these processes. Most Members have already attended one training session which was helpful. However could the Executive Member tell us what on-going training opportunities will be provided in order to ensure that we are doing our bit alongside our officer colleagues, to ensure sound decisions are taken for the benefit of the District?”

Councillor Duncan Irvine responded as follows:

“I am sure those Members of the Development Control Committee who attended the training that was facilitated by Jed Griffiths last month cannot have failed to have learned more about their roles and responsibilities as Member of the Committee. For those Members who were unable to attend, I can assure them that they too will find their knowledge and understanding of the development management process will be enhanced when we re-run the session. Of course Members who attended the live session are more than welcome to come and see the recording.

I am keen to build on the momentum of this training and am working with the Planning Team to identify further opportunities to help Members improve their knowledge and skills. Areas I am looking at include planning enforcement; development in the Green Belt and good practice for Development Control Committees.

The Future Mole Valley project is one of the single most important pieces of work that this organisation has undertaken. I want to make sure that all members of the Council have the understanding and confidence to consider and take what are going to be tough decisions about the location of future development in the District and the policies that will guide it. So I will be looking to arrange training about Local Plan preparation. As part of our work in preparing the Local Plan we are going to have to decide how accommodation is planned for the Gypsy and Traveller community. This is a specialised aspect of plan making and I think it would be appropriate that we have training on the best practice in this area.

As I said in answer to an earlier question from Cllr Seed (see Appendix 1), next Monday, the 16th October, we are holding a workshop on the feedback from the Future Mole Valley consultation and a debate about the strategic direction the new Local Plan should take. I encourage all Members to attend and help contribute to shaping the discussion.”

(7) The following question was submitted by Councillor Paul Kennedy:

“Following the recent business rates revaluation, what percentage of local business rates collected by the Council in each year of the current 4 year funding deal with the Government is now expected to be retained by Mole Valley District Council and by Surrey County Council?”

Councillor Vivienne Michael responded (on behalf of Councillor Metin Huseyin) as follows:

“The totals of Business Rates collectable over each of the four years of the current funding deal are:-

2016/17 - £40.1m, 2017/18 - £44.0m, 2018/19 - £44.8m, 2019/20 - £45.7m

The expected amounts to be retained by MVDC are:-

2016/17 - £1.4m (3.6%), 2017/18 - £1.6m (3.6%), 2018/19 - £1.6m (3.6%), 2019/20 - £0.6m (1.3%)

The expected amounts paid to Surrey County Council are:-

2016/17 - £4.0m (10%), 2017/18 - £4.4m (10%), 2018/19 - £4.5m (10%), 2019/20 - £4.6m (10%).”

Councillor Paul Kennedy asked the following supplemental question:

“The rates are modest and I know that there are proposals for participation in a pilot scheme. Is there any further update that could be given on this scheme?”

Councillor Vivienne Michael replied as follows:

“On 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017, the Executive agreed to the submission of a joint application by MVDC along with the other Surrey Authorities for pilot status in the Government’s testing of its business rate reforms. Since that meeting Surrey Leaders have agreed that the bid should be submitted, the deadline for which is 27<sup>th</sup> October. The Government has signalled that it is keen for bids from two tiered area to come forward. Judging by the current guidance there is likely to be a one to two year financial advantage in piloting the scheme.

It should be noted that in order to comply with the Government's conditions, we will need to present proposals to invest any extra money generated into initiatives that will promote economic growth and or financial stability."

#### 41. Motions

##### **Motion 3/2017**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor David Draper and seconded by Councillor Paul Elderton:

" Council notes that annual residents' parking permits, which can be used in certain of the Council car parks allowing parking car parking all day, every day, are available to residents who live in the following areas:

- Ashted: Albert Road, Gaywood Road, Grove Road and Park Walk
- Leatherhead: Church Street, Church Road, Church Walk, Highlands Road and The Crescent
- Dorking: Church Street and North Street

at a cost of £350 per annum (£87.50 quarterly).

Council believes it is more equitable to benchmark the costs of these residents' parking permits against the County Council's on-street parking scheme, and resolves that the Administration consider this reduction when formulating the 2018-2019 budget and report back to Council on what action can be taken."

The Council resolved to take the motion on the night.

Members debated the motion in full. There was support across the Chamber for the proposed Motion, however it was suggested that it would be a good idea for the recently established Car Parking Scrutiny Panel to review residents permits. As such, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vivienne Michael suggested an amendment to the resolution which was accepted.

**RESOLVED:** That the newly established Car Park Working Group be asked to review current policy and practice in relation to residents' parking permits, benchmarking the costs of residents' parking permits against other equivalent schemes provided by other Surrey Boroughs and Districts and the County Council's on-street parking scheme with a view to making recommendations as part of the 2018-2019 budget setting process.

##### **Motion 4/2017**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Claire Malcomson and seconded by Councillor Bridget Kendrick:

" This Council

1. Recognises the trend toward Hybrid and Electric Vehicles.
2. Recognises that it should provide leadership, better managing the transition to low carbon and low pollution impact vehicles, especially EVs.
3. Recognises that offering charging facilities will encourage tourists and other visitors to Mole Valley.

The Council Therefore Resolves to:-

1. Promote, through its communication channels, the locations of charging points.

2. Research the power supply network that could be used to supply EV charging points to identify their optimum locations across the District.
3. Revise, through the local planning process, MVDC planning policy to require all new developments with 5 car parking spaces or more to have at least one charging point.
4. Aim to install at least one charging point in each Mole Valley car park in the short term, gradually increasing this number to meet demand.”

The Council resolved to take the motion on the night.

Members debated the motion in full. There was support across the Chamber for the intent of the Motion, however it was again suggested that it would be a good idea for the recently established Car Parking Scrutiny Panel to review the provision of EV Charging Points. As such, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vivienne Michael suggested an amendment to the resolution which was accepted by the Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council:-

1. Continue to promote, through its communication channels, the locations of charging points.
2. Continue its discussions regarding current and projected future demand as well as requisite power supply with a view to installing the appropriate number of EV charging points in Council car parks and other appropriate locations across the District.
3. Ask the newly established Car Park Working Group to give further consideration to how the Council might continue to determine and meet future demand for EV Charging Points through its planning and other policies.

(NB. Counted vote 36 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention)

### **Motion 5/2017**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Margaret Cooksey and seconded by Councillor Paul Kennedy:

"This Council

1. recognises the significant role played by the Surrey Performing Arts Library in the promotion and organisation of the arts in Mole Valley;
2. is deeply concerned about the possibility of access to the Library being lost as a consequence of County Council budget cuts;

and therefore resolves:

1. to engage in serious negotiations with the County Council with a view to ensuring the retention of the library;
2. to consider seriously all opportunities to provide support for the Library including financial assistance and rates relief.”

The Council resolved to take the motion on the night.

Members debated the motion in full. There was support across the Chamber for the proposed Motion, however it was emphasised that the Council was not in a position to meet the Surrey County Councils funding shortfall and that all possible options for maintaining the service should be considered, even if it was not in its present format.

**RESOLVED:** The Council resolved:

1. to engage in serious negotiations with the County Council with a view to ensuring the retention of the library;
2. to consider seriously all opportunities to provide support for the Library including financial assistance and rates relief.

(NB. Counted vote 36 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention)

### Agenda Item 12 - Questions remaining to be asked

#### **(1) Submitted by Councillor Sarah Seed**

Could the Executive Member for Planning please update us as to the outcome of the first Future Mole Valley consultation, both in terms of the overall success of the consultation itself as well as the headline results which it yielded?

#### **Answer by the Executive Member for Planning - Councillor Duncan Irvine**

I am pleased to report that a written summary of the Future Mole Valley consultation will shortly be circulated to all Members and published on the Future Mole Valley website. The summary will include a breakdown of the responses and information on the success of the consultation itself. It will also provide information on the response to the brownfield and greenfield options on which we sought people's views.

Can I also use this opportunity to remind members of the forthcoming Future Mole Valley workshop on Monday, 16th October? This event will give Members the opportunity to discuss which of the strategic options for the location of future development in Mole Valley should be chosen having regard to the consultation response. It will also enable discussion about what the effect of selecting different options may have on achieving other objectives and strategies of the Council.

#### **(2) Submitted by Councillor James Friend**

Would Cllr Osborne-Patterson please provide an update on the launch of the Mole Valley Rural Communities Strategy, its action plan and the rural tourism project?

#### **Answer by the Executive Member for Communities, Services and Housing - Councillor Corinna Osborne-Patterson**

I am pleased to provide each member this evening a copy of the Mole Valley Rural Community which was launched on 13th July 2017. The strategy has received a very positive welcome from the various stakeholders who have been involved in its development. The document is also available on the MVDC web-site.

The Action Plan for 2017 to 2018 which sits alongside the Strategy is well underway; officers and partners were already delivering a number of elements before the document was published and other actions are now being addressed. We are working towards organising the Annual Rural Community Summit which is scheduled to take place early in 2018. We will be reporting on what has been achieved during the year and planning the action plan for 2018/19.

The rural tourism project, known as "Wheels Feet and Hooves", was also launched on 13th July 2017 alongside the Rural Community Strategy. The project will develop a Destination Management Plan for rural Mole Valley. It will be looking at how businesses can maximise the income potential from visitors to the area. There will be particular attention to those involved in outdoor pursuits, particularly cycling, walking and horse riding.

Following a competitive tender exercise earlier this year, the contract for the development of the plan was awarded to Tourism South East and Associates. Since the launch in July, the contractors have been interviewing businesses and carrying out visitor surveys in tourist hotspots throughout Mole Valley. In the coming months a number of workshops will be arranged for local businesses to discuss their issues. We will also be looking at possible solutions to them which will be developed into an action plan.

#### **(3) Submitted by Councillor Paul Kennedy**

What assessment has the Council made of the recent gym refurbishment at the Leatherhead Leisure Centre, and whether this represents value for money for council tax payers?

### **Answer by the Executive Member for Wellbeing - Councillor Lucy Botting**

Fusion, the operators of Leatherhead Leisure Centre were contractually obliged to replace the gym equipment at least once during the contract term.

Fusion decided that the time was right to replace all the equipment due to the old equipment becoming unreliable and breaking down frequently as it was coming to the end of its operational life. The costs to maintain it were escalating and customer were experiencing difficulties with the old equipment and not receiving good service or value for money for their membership costs.

Prior to doing the refurbishment, Fusion consulted with centre members and users to get a an understanding of what was wanted.

Fusion have replaced the outgoing equipment (for which MVDC have received the part exchange value) with equipment in excess of the value of the old equipment.

Since the refurbishment has been complete, both Fusion and MVDC has listened to customer feedback, both positive and negative and Fusion have purchased some addition equipment as a result of this feedback.

The new equipment is now much more reliable and covered by a full manufacturers warranty which improves the customer experience.

Post refurbishment membership sales have been positive which indicates that customers think the facility represents value for money.

### **Written response to Supplementary Question from Councillor Margaret Cooksey**

Q. What system do we have in place for collecting the money that has yet to be paid and is outstanding?

### **Response from the Executive Member for Planning, Councillor Duncan Irvine**

A. We have introduced a full-time administrative post (funding through CIL) to administer the process of collecting CIL, including where necessary enforcement. The process is prescribed by regulation with demand notices taking the place of invoices, set periods for payment (60 days for most demand notices; 90-120 days for larger schemes paying by instalment), and our administrator chasing payments, with various enforcement powers including surcharging for late payment. If we have to resort to legal action, it would be through the magistrates court. That has not been required to date, although if necessary we will using either our own legal services or contracting cases out (for example Tandridge DC provide a litigation service). Management of CIL administration is under Planning Support Services.

We intend to report on an annual basis to the Executive with CIL receipts collected and spent, including the neighbourhood element. The first report is likely to be the February Exec meeting.