

MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**EXECUTIVE**

held on 20 January 2022

Present:

Cllr A Azad (Chairman)  
Cllr S Ashall (Vice-Chair)

Cllr G W Elson            Cllr C S Kemp  
Cllr D Harlow

Also Present: Councillors A-M Barker, K Howard, D E Hughes, E Nicholson and M A Whitehand.

Absent: Councillor K M Davis.

**1. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 8 December 2021 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Davis.

**3. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business under Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor A Azad declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

The interest of Councillor K M Davis was referred to in the agenda but it should be noted that Councillor Davis sent apologies to the meeting.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D Harlow declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor C S Kemp declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Julie Fisher, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mrs Fisher could advise the Executive on those items.

The interest of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Joanne McIntosh, was referred to in the agenda but it should be noted that Mrs McIntosh sent apologies to the meeting.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Planning, Giorgio Framalico, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mr Framalico could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Neighbourhood Services, Geoff McManus, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mr McManus could advise the Executive on those items.

The interest of the Director of Housing, Louise Strongitharm, was referred to in the agenda but it should be noted that Mrs Strongitharm sent apologies to the meeting.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Finance, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning Woking Football Club and/or the GolDev Woking Limited development. The interest arose from her husband having a small shareholding in Woking Football Club. The interest was such that Mrs Clarke could advise the Executive on those items.

## **5. QUESTIONS**

No written questions had been submitted under Section 3 of the Executive Procedure Rules.

## **6. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR M WHITEHAND - WOMEN'S SAFETY IN PUBLIC PLACES EXE22-020**

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor M Whitehand

"The Council will bring forward policies that ensure women feel safe when out and about in Woking's public places. One of which should be the designation of women only parking places in its car parks during the hours of darkness, especially those sited near staircases and entrances. Women's safety should feature greatly in its community safety programme and every endeavour be given in establishing what areas can be reviewed that would deliver such assurance."

Councillor Whitehand attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. Discussion ensued on the advantages and disadvantages of women only parking spaces,

and it was noted that neither the Council's Parking Service Manager or Surrey Police Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) were aware of any segregated type parking facility in the UK. The Executive was informed that the DOCO recommended that female only areas were not used and that people who were concerned around their safety should be encouraged to use the main car parks around the Peacocks Centre due to the high footfall.

Councillor Harlow, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, welcomed the Motion and was supportive of promoting more awareness of the measures already in place, such as clearly signed help points in the Council's main larger car parks which were linked to the control room and manned 24 hours. It was noted that the Council's car parks had been awarded the Park Mark, a Police Crime Prevention Initiative aimed at reducing crime and fear of crime in parking facilities. Officers would continue to look at further improvements in order to ensure women felt safe in the Council's car parks.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion be supported.**

**7. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR E NICHOLSON - MALE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN  
EXE22-021**

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor E Nicholson

"That Woking Borough Council notes that violence against women is a serious, prevalent, and preventable issue in our society.

Male violence against women must be ended, once and for all. Simply agreeing with the principle is not enough.

As a responsible authority we have a moral obligation to stand against and work to end male violence against women.

**MOTION**

Council recognises the importance of White Ribbon and its contribution as part of a global campaign taking action to stop male violence against women and resolves to become an accredited authority.

Council commits to making White Ribbon Day part of the civic calendar with ambassador-led activities involving staff, members and the public.

Council agrees to raise awareness of the White Ribbon Campaign through regular updates and features in internal and external communications and provide opportunity to highlight the work of the Women's Refuge and the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.

Council will provide support to staff and members to take the pledge never to commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women and to become ambassadors and champions. Council will work closely with local partnership agencies and organisations involved in tackling male violence against women to work towards making Woking a White Ribbon Borough.

Council commits to hosting annual awareness training for all members.”

Councillor Nicholson attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. The Executive heard that the Council already acknowledged White Ribbon and had supported the 16 days of activism in recent years. The Executive was supportive of the Council becoming an accredited authority, noting that it would require a commitment across the organisation and a steering group to be identified to oversee a three year action plan. Following a question, the Executive was advised that the cost of accreditation was £300 annually and would also require sufficient staff resource. Councillor Kemp stated that he would be happy to volunteer as a male ambassador in support of White Ribbon.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion be supported.**

**8. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR A-M BARKER - GOLDSWORTH PARK LAKE FOOTPATH LIGHTING EXE22-022**

At its meeting on 2 December 2021, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor A-M Barker

“Motion to update Goldsworth Park lake footpath lighting to LED system

Council notes that

Taking exercise in the open air has become increasingly popular in a Covid world.

Reducing journeys by carbon emitting vehicles is good for the climate change agenda.

Goldsworth Park lake path provides both a pleasant and enjoyable environment for exercise and a walking route for journeys across and around Goldsworth Park.

Well lit paths encourage use of walking routes, particularly in winter months.

Many people will not use paths with significant dark spots.

There have been recent failures of lights on the Goldsworth lake path and SERCO are struggling to find parts to fix the lights.

Unlike most lighting in the borough the lights around Goldsworth Park lake are the responsibility of Woking Council.

Surrey County Council is converting all of its lighting stock to more environmentally friendly LED lights, which last longer and have fewer problems.

Council calls for:

A review of options to secure replacement LED lighting for Goldsworth Park lake footpath, to include:

Investigating whether Surrey would take on the responsibility for these lights as there may be economies of scale to upgrade these lights alongside work on their own lighting stock

Exploring funding options from environmental funders to update the lights.

Look for funding that may be available from crime and safety budgets, including those held by the Police and Crime Commissioner.”

Councillor Barker attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. Councillor Barker highlighted the benefits of LED lights in terms of cost effectiveness and energy use. The Executive noted that two of the lights around Goldsworth Park lake had been replaced with LED lights and Officers would gain feedback on the effectiveness of the new lights before making further plans. Officers would continue to explore funding options.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the Motion be supported.**

**9. PHASE 2 – INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY STUDY AND DELIVERY PLAN (IDP) - EAST OF THE BOROUGH AND BOROUGH-WIDE STUDY EXE22-014**

Following the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced a report which set out the second part of the joint Study with other local authorities and partners on the future infrastructure requirements of the east of the Borough. It was noted that the revised Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) also reviewed the borough-wide infrastructure needs to support the delivery of the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPD. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the IDP at its meeting on 16 December 2021. The Portfolio Holder advised that an Infrastructure Sub-Group of the Joint Committee had been set up to co-ordinate the delivery of infrastructure.

Discussion ensued on the comprehensive report and it was noted that it was intended to combine Parts 1 and 2 of the Study and to publish the revised IDP as a single document. Comments raised regarding formatting could be taken on board by Officers.

Regarding crematorium capacity, the Executive was informed that no evidence was provided by infrastructure providers during the 2021 review to indicate that the needs of existing and future residents generated by planned growth would not be met by Woking Crematorium and crematoria in adjacent boroughs. However the Portfolio Holder highlighted that the IDP continued to identify an opportunity to enhance infrastructure provision at Brookwood Cemetery, including increasing cremation capacity.

Members discussed infrastructure needs in the Borough including gas and electricity, the need of the ambulance service, and the Byfleets pharmacy needs. It was noted that the IDP was a living document which was reviewed bi-annually and could be updated to reflect changes in requirements. Regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging capacity, the Executive heard that UK Power Networks (UKPN) had identified the growth in demand for EVs and was prioritising areas which its models had identified as the first ones to be overloaded when the new load materialised.

Following a query regarding out-of-date information in the IDP, the Portfolio Holder agreed to take the comments onboard and confirmed that the IDP would be updated before it was published.

Following a question concerning the latest status of the Rive Ditch Flood Alleviation Scheme and Horsell SANGs, the Executive was advised that the work was being led by Surrey County Council and supported by Woking Borough Council and Horsell Common Preservation Society as the landowner. It was noted that there had been delays in receiving the required consents. Once consent had been received it was hoped to commence the works, which were expected to take around six months to complete, in Spring 2022. Questions were also raised regarding cycling, playing pitches, playgrounds and Sanway-Byfleet Flood Alleviation project.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the contents of the Infrastructure Capacity Study and Delivery Plan be noted and approved.**

Reason: To ensure that future development is supported by adequate infrastructure in a timely manner to facilitate sustainable development.

**10. REVIEW OF THE OUTLOOK, AMENITY AND DAYLIGHT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) EXE22-012**

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced the report which outlined the responses to the consultation on the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and recommended to Council that the proposed amendments be approved. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the report at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the SPD and the report.

Following a request for the document to highlight changes in order to make it more easily accessible, the Portfolio Holder agreed to discuss the request with Officers.

Discussion ensued on paragraph 3.18 of the revised SPD on page 172 of the Agenda Pack regarding communal amenity space. Officers advised that it would be difficult to request that a minimum amount of amenity space should be delivered by a development and advised against setting a rule in this regard, noting that other factors may make a scheme favourable. It was agreed that the issue would be discussed with Officers prior to Council.

Following a query regarding the list of consultees, the Executive was advised that Officers were currently reviewing the list to ensure it was up-to-date.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That (i) the various representations to the Outlook, Amenity and Daylight Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**

**(ii) the revised Outlook, Amenity and Daylight SPD included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of managing**

**development across the borough and other planning decisions;**

**(iii) Appendix 2 of the SPD which relates to examples of separation distances of other local authorities be deleted; and**

**(iv) the requirements of the SPD should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022.**

Reason: To ensure that there is up to date guidance on achieving suitable and appropriate outlook, amenity, daylight and sunlight in new residential development.

**11. REVIEW OF THE THAMES BASIN HEATHS SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS AVOIDANCE STRATEGY EXE22-013**

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, introduced the report which outlined the responses to the public consultation on the draft Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA) Avoidance Strategy, and recommended to Council that the proposed amendments to the revised Avoidance Strategy be approved. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the Strategy at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the Strategy.

Following a question regarding existing open space accessible to residents, the Executive was advised that existing open space could be brought to SANG standard if it met the necessary criteria. However, any existing use of the land would be discounted from the SANG capacity. Regarding transport and fuel costs for the ranger, the Executive was informed that the rangers patrolled the SANGs and the cost for doing so was part of the maintenance cost.

Discussion ensued on disabled access to SANGs. The Portfolio Holder commented that the Council would always consider accessibility when planning any new SANG or undertaking improvement works to existing SANG, with a view to making as accessible as possible within the limitations of the site. The use of boardwalks at Heather Farm was highlighted.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That (i) the various representations to the consultation on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy together with Officer's responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**

**(ii) the revised Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of avoiding harm to the integrity of the Special Protection Areas due to development pressures;**

**(iii) the requirements of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas Avoidance Strategy should apply to all relevant decisions from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022; and**

**(iv) Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council work in partnership to ensure access to SANGs and other parts of the Borough by all modes are considered, and this to be added to the remit of the Infrastructure Task Group.**

Reason: To help avoid harm to the SPAs as a result of development.

## **12. REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) EXE22-011**

Following the meeting of the Executive on 9 September 2021, the Executive received a report which outlined the responses to the public consultation on the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), and recommended to Council that the proposed modifications to the SCI be adopted to provide the necessary framework for involving the local community in planning decisions. It was noted that the Local Development Framework Working Group had considered the revised SCI at its meeting on 16 December 2021 and the Group's minor modifications had been incorporated into the SCI.

Councillor Ashall highlighted a modification which he was currently working on with Officers regarding making clear to residents who would receive neighbour letters and why, for example, neighbours two doors down from planning applications. The Executive welcomed the proposed modification and hoped that progress would be made before Council on 10 February 2022.

### **RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That (i) the various representations to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) consultation together with Officers' responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**

**(ii) the revised Statement of Community Involvement included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted for the purposes of setting out how the Council wishes the local community to be involved and engaged when preparing key planning policy documents and determining of planning applications; and**

**(iii) the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022.**

Reason: To provide the necessary framework for involving the local community in planning decisions.

**13. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION EXE22-006**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Azad, introduced a report which provided analysis of the feedback from communities through the engagement roadshows and questionnaire which took place between November and December 2021. The Leader stated that the Council had a bold vision to be in constant communication with residents and to have an embedded culture of consultation. The Leader thanked all those involved in the eight roadshows across the Borough. It was noted that a more comprehensive response to the engagement would be produced and reported to the Executive on 24 March 2022, alongside the Corporate Plan 2022-27, which showed the actions taken as a result of the feedback.

Discussion ensued on the diversity of responses received, noting that they would be used to influence corporate priorities for the Council. The Executive was advised that the Council would continue to reach out to all ages and communities across the Borough, and it was hoped to reach more diverse communities when a further series of roadshows and engagement activity was undertaken later in the year.

RESOLVED That the following be noted:

- (i) feedback analysis from the Community engagement roadshows and questionnaire; and
- (ii) a full response will be presented to the meeting of the Executive on 24 March 2022 alongside the 2022-2027 Corporate Plan.

Reason: To update Members on the community engagement feedback and next steps.

**14. UPDATE ON THE HOUSING SERVICE EXE22-015**

Following the Council's decision to bring Housing Management and Asset Management services back in-house and procure Housing Repairs and Maintenance works and services through third party contractors from 1 April 2022, Councillor Harlow, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced a report which provided an update on the significant progress achieved. The Executive heard that good progress had been made despite the complexity of the process, and that the Council was well positioned to provide a stronger housing offer from April 2022.

Areas of concern were raised such as the TUPE process, the volume of work still outstanding in preparation for April, and performance of the existing contractor during the remaining weeks of the NVH contract. The Portfolio Holder reported that the Council had made a proactive effort to engage with staff and was confident that all expected staff would TUPE into the Council. The Portfolio Holder also confirmed that all staff were at capacity to both demobilise the NVH contract and mobilise the new arrangements.

Following a question regarding outstanding complaints when the NVH contact ended, it was noted that the Council would ensure that all complaints were resolved either by NVH or the Council. In addition, the Council would be reviewing its Complaint Policy to ensure it complied with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code by April 2022.

RESOLVED

That progress on transforming Housing Services from April 2022 be noted.

Reason: To provide an update on major changes to the Housing Service that will transform services to tenants and leaseholders.

**15. HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY EXE21-059**

The Executive received a report which sought approval to update the Housing Assistance Policy to allow the Council to take a more flexible approach to adaptations to meet individual needs in line with the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The Executive was advised that Woking was fortunate to have a large budget for adaptations and it was not necessary to put works on hold due to lack of funding. It was explained that the length of time for grants to come through depended on the work to be undertaken, how involved the work was and the assessed need and priority of the client.

RESOLVED

That (i) the Housing Assistance Policy 2022, as attached to the report, be approved; and

(ii) the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, be delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Policy as required.

Reason: The provisions outlined in the Housing Assistance Policy will positively impact and support the health and wellbeing of the residents of Woking.

**16. RECOMMENDATION FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - EXECUTIVE/OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROTOCOL EXE22-019**

The Executive received a report which set out a recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Executive agree an Executive/Overview and Scrutiny Committee Protocol. The Protocol had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2021 and the Committee had agreed to recommend that the Executive agree the Protocol. The Leader was pleased to strengthen the role of the Committee to hold the Executive to account and to ensure an open and transparent Council.

Discussion ensued on the proposed quarterly meetings between the Leader of the Council and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairman. The Leader commented that it was important to have a regular dialogue to ensure collaborative working. The Leader had no objection to a note of the meetings being taken.

Following some suggested wording changes to the Protocol, the Leader was not minded to amend the Protocol wording as the document had been reviewed and agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that the Protocol would be formally added to the Constitution during its review, and would therefore be considered by Council in due course.

RESOLVED

That the Executive/Overview and Scrutiny Committee Protocol, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed.

Reason: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved at the Committee meeting on 22 November 2021 to recommend to the Executive that the Executive/Overview and Scrutiny Committee Protocol be agreed.

**17. TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE LOCALLY EXE22-018**

The Executive received a report which provided an overview of the Council's climate change activities to date, its local pledges and continuing climate commitments. The report also formally confirmed the Council's support for Surrey County Council's newly adopted Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan. The important role that local authorities could play in leveraging climate action more broadly through policies, partnerships and public engagement was highlighted in the report.

Councillor Howard, Chairman of the Climate Change Working Group, expressed disappointment that the paper had not been considered by the Group before being presented to the Executive. Councillor Howard advised that he had received apologies from the Portfolio Holder and Officers for the oversight, which had been largely due to a perceived shortness of time in order to feed into the Corporate Strategy. The Leader recognised the important work of the cross-party Working Group and agreed with its Chairman that the Group should not be side-lined in the future.

Following a question regarding the independent carbon footprint assessor, it was explained that its remit had yet to be determined and such an assessment remained open for discussion.

Members also discussed Surrey EV Strategy forum representation and EV charging capacity in communal residential car parking areas.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the continuing corporate commitment to addressing climate change and its inclusion at the core of the emerging Corporate Plan 2022 – 2027 be noted;
- (ii) support of Surrey County Council's Climate Change Delivery Plan be formally noted;
- (iii) the priorities for corporate climate action as listed in Appendix 1 to the report be noted and approval given to the allocation of funding for an independent carbon footprint assessment;
- (iv) items in section 9 of the report be noted as additional low/no cost options that will be progressed to further embed the corporate commitment to climate action; and
- (v) the affordability and mechanics of creating a Corporate Carbon Offset Fund (or similar) as outlined in section 10 of the report to

ringfence funds for the delivery of climate projects be explored by the Director of Neighbourhood Services in consultation with (a) the Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, (b) the Director of Finance and (c) the Director of Legal and Democratic Services.

Reason: To recognise the Council's long-term and continuing commitment to local climate action; and to strengthen its position in meeting its climate and ecological declaration commitments.

## **18. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION**

The Executive considered the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book) October 2021. Following a request for an update on garden waste collections, the Leader was pleased to confirm that the next scheduled garden waste collections would take place from 21 February 2022, followed up with monthly collections. The Executive was also informed that more HGV drivers had joined the contract.

Affordable housing provision was discussed and it was noted that there were several affordable housing developments in progress. The 77 homes which were non-decent were highlighted and the Portfolio Holder confirmed that those homes would be prioritised for the 2022-23 Asset Management Plan.

RESOLVED

That the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, October 2021, be received.

Reason: To manage the performance of the Council.

## **19. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 20 in view of the nature of the proceedings that, if members of the press and public were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, to the Local Government Act 1972.

Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

## **20. PROPERTY MANAGEMENT EXE22-024**

RESOLVED

That the recommendations set out in the Part II report be agreed.

Reason: As set out in the Part II report.

**This document was published on Friday 21 January 2022 and the decisions within it will be implemented on Monday 31 January 2022, subject to call-in.**

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and ended at 9.14 pm.

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_