

MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**EXECUTIVE**

held on 14 September 2017

Present:

Cllr D J Bittleston (Chairman)  
Cllr C S Kemp (Vice-Chair)

Cllr A Azad                      Cllr S Hussain  
Cllr A C L Bowes              Cllr M Pengelly  
Cllr Mrs B A Hunwicks

Also Present: Councillors T Aziz, A-M Barker, J E Bond, K Howard, D E Hughes and I Johnson

**1. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 July 2017 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the Leader of the Council, Councillor D J Bittleston, Mrs B A Hunwicks and C S Kemp declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute item 9 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, minute item 11 – Land Management – Former Planets Site and minute item 12 – Land Management – Acquisition of Woking Town Centre Property arising from their positions as Directors of the Thamesway Group of Companies. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

Councillor S Hussain declared an interest in minute item 4 – Licensing Private Rented Accommodation – Proposal to make a selective licensing designation in part of Canalside Ward arising from his position as a small landlord. As Councillor Hussain was a landlord of a property not in the Canalside Ward, the interest was not a formal interest under the Members' Code of Conduct. Councillor Hussain would, if advised to do so by the Chief Executive, leave the Chamber if the debate became a wider discussion on landlords.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, and Strategic Director, Sue Barham, declared an interest in minute item 9 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, minute item 11 – Land Management – Former Planets Site and minute item 12 – Land Management – Acquisition of Woking Town Centre Property arising from their positions as Directors of the Thamesway Group of Companies. The interests were such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, declared an interest in minute item 11 – Land Management – Former Planets Site and minute item 12 – Land Management – Acquisition of Woking Town Centre Property arising from his position as a Director of Victoria Square Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, would declare an interest in any item in which Brookwood Cemetery was referred to arising from his position as a Director of Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited, Brookwood Park Limited and Brookwood Cemetery Limited.

### **3. PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR ACCESS SCHEME POLICY**

The Executive received a report which recommended to Council the adoption of the Private Rented Sector Access Scheme Policy. Councillor C S Kemp, Portfolio Holder for Private Sector Housing, explained that the Policy set out how the Council intended to assist homeless households access accommodation in the private rented sector to prevent and relieve homelessness, as well as encouraging landlords to engage with the Council. Following a question regarding the impact on existing tenants and bond holders from April 2018, it was noted that tenants with bonds would be given advice. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that a holistic approach would be taken when assisting tenants. The Executive was advised that the report would be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 18 September 2017.

#### **RECOMMENDED to Council**

- That**
- (i) the Private Rented Sector Access Scheme Policy, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be adopted;**
  - (ii) the Strategic Director for Housing be delegated authority to agree leases with private landlords for accommodation to be used in accordance with the Policy;**
  - (iii) the Strategic Director for Housing be delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Policy (specifically including changes to the scope and level of incentives) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder;**
  - (iv) the Council's Allocation Policy be amended such that existing tenants accommodated through the Council's existing Private Rented Sector Access schemes cease to be eligible to apply for the Council's Housing Register after 31 March 2018; and**
  - (v) the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant be used to provide the additional £95k budget provision required to deliver the Let's Rent Connect scheme and £10k for the Let's Rent Complete scheme.**

Reason: The adoption of a policy ensures that the Council acts consistently in providing incentives and other activities to

procure private rented accommodation for homeless households. It also provides private landlords with transparent information on how the Council intends to work with them in helping homeless households secure accommodation and assists in marketing the Council's schemes to private landlords. The policy also ensures that the Council's offer to private landlords is competitive within the marketplace and that wherever possible homes across the Borough are secured for local families rather than homeless households from other local authority areas.

**4. LICENSING PRIVATE RENTED ACCOMMODATION - PROPOSAL TO MAKE A SELECTIVE LICENSING DESIGNATION IN PART OF CANALSIDE WARD**

The Executive received a report which recommended to Council the proposal to introduce a selective licensing scheme in part of Canalside Ward. It was noted that the scheme aimed to deliver improvements to the management of private rented accommodation through the imposition of licence conditions. The Portfolio Holder for Private Sector Housing, Councillor Kemp, reported that there would be opportunities for landlords to join the proposed scheme without paying a fee. Councillor Kemp advised that the report would be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 18 September 2017, which would provide an opportunity for Members to go through the proposal in detail. Concern was expressed about the suitability of the scheme, the cost of the scheme, the potential impact on tenants and the consultation responses to the proposal. Councillor I Johnson commented that information on the schemes used by other Borough's would be useful when the matter was discussed further at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- That**
- (i) the Head of Democratic and Legal Services be delegated authority to designate a selective licensing designation under the Housing Act 2004 within the area of Canalside Ward set out in the report and at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to the report;**
  - (ii) the selective licensing designation come into force on 01 March 2018;**
  - (iii) the selective licensing designation cease on 28 February 2023;**
  - (iv) the fee structure for the selective licensing scheme set out in Appendix 9 to the report be adopted and subsequently reviewed as part of the Council's fees and charges setting process;**
  - (v) the Strategic Director for Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be delegated authority to amend the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy to incorporate the introduction of selective licensing and rename as the Housing Standards**

**Licensing Policy; and**

- (vi) the Strategic Director for Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be delegated authority to make minor amendments to the Housing Standards Licensing Policy.**

Reason: Following completion of the public consultation in respect of the proposal to introduce a selective licensing scheme in part of Canalside Ward, it was now appropriate for a decision to be made whether to proceed with the scheme.

If it was agreed that the scheme be introduced, the Council was required to make a designation for the scheme and delegated authority was required for that purpose.

The introduction of the scheme would also require amendments to the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy to incorporate the selective licensing scheme, and it was proposed that the policy be renamed. The provision of delegated authority to make minor amendments to the policy would ensure that the policy could readily be updated to reflect minor legislative change.

**5. MAJOR WORKS AFFECTING LEASEHOLDERS AND ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PAYMENT OF SERVICE CHARGES**

The Executive received a report which recommended to Council proposed updates to the procedure for consulting Leaseholders for major works and approval for an updated scheme for recharging major works service charges. It was noted that Leaseholders had been consulted via the Leaseholder Forum held on 6 September 2017.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- That (i) the consultation procedure and payment plan arrangements for Leaseholders outlined in the report be adopted; and**
- (ii) delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director for Housing to make minor changes to the policy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.**

Reason: To update the existing procedures to ensure the Council consults effectively with Leaseholders and in doing so, complies with the statutory legal duty to notify Leaseholders of works and additionally, provide financial payment options that can assist Leaseholders to meet their commitments whilst adopting a sympathetic approach.

## 6. BUSINESS RATES RELIEF SCHEMES

The Executive received a report which sought approval of the Council's Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme. It was noted that the distribution of relief would be to those properties with a rateable value between £20,000 and £200,000 who had received an increase in rates of more than 12.5%. Officers explained that the reliefs set out in the report aimed to provide businesses with additional time in order to adjust to the new business rates levels. It was noted that the charges levied had been provided by the Valuation Office.

### RESOLVED

- That (i) the Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme as outlined in the report, and Appendix 1, be approved;
- (ii) the Award of Discretionary Relief be delegated to the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Manager and, in his absence, his deputy (Revenues Manager); and
- (iii) any appeals relating to the scheme would be determined by the Finance Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason: To approve the Council's Discretionary Business Rates Relief Scheme.

## 7. HEATHSIDE CRESCENT CAR PARK EXTENSION

The Executive received a report which sought authority to enable Officers to implement the extension of Heathside Crescent Car Park within the approved budget subject to Planning Consent. Following a question regarding the impact on pedestrians and cyclists following the new access on White Rose Lane, the Leader of the Council advised that the matter would be for the Planning Committee to consider. Further concern was expressed at the interaction with traffic in White Rose Lane and assurances were sought that the issues would be addressed as appropriate. The Executive noted that it had not been possible to provide an entrance and exit on Heathside Crescent due to insufficient space. Regarding electric vehicle charging points, the Executive was informed that the capacity to install electric vehicle charging points in the future would be installed in the car park.

### RESOLVED

That the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised to implement the extension of Heathside Crescent car park based on a budget of £10m subject to Planning Consent.

Reason: To enable the implementation of the extension of Heathside Crescent car park subject to Planning Consent.

## 8. HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The Executive received a report which sought authority to enable Officers to submit funding bids under the Housing Infrastructure Fund. Following a question regarding the proposed bid for Marginal Viability Funding for the Victoria Square Project, Officers explained that the proposal yet to come forward to Council comprising 38 additional properties would be for Studio and 1 Bed properties and these would not count as affordable housing. It was noted that the proposed 38 additional properties would be more attainable for people being able to rent. It was highlighted that the Victoria Square Oversight Panel would be considering a proposal for an additional parking infrastructure of some 400 car park spaces at its next meeting.

### RESOLVED

- That (i) the Finance Director be authorised to draft and submit a bid for Marginal Viability Funding under the Housing Infrastructure Fund for phase 1 of the Sheerwater Regeneration Project;
- (ii) the Finance Director be authorised to draft and submit a bid for Marginal Viability Funding under the Housing Infrastructure Fund for the Victoria Square Project; and
- (iii) the Chief Executive be authorised to work with Surrey County Council to draft and submit an expression of interest for Forward Funding under the Housing Infrastructure Fund for the highway network upgrade south of the railway.

Reason: To secure external funding to increase the provision of housing within the Borough.

## 9. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION

The Executive considered the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book), July 2017. Regarding the number of affordable homes delivered, the Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council was committed to achieving more affordable homes and that the Council had achieved 36 affordable homes by the end of August 2017.

Following a question regarding an increase in fly tipping incidents, Councillor Mrs B A Hunwicks, Portfolio Holder for Waste and Recycling, reported that departments were working hard with colleagues across the Council on the issue. Councillor Mrs Hunwicks highlighted the importance of making residents aware of the need to check that their builders were registered to take rubbish to the tip. It was commented that it was the householders responsibility if building waste was fly tipped. Members discussed street cleaning and landscaping satisfaction and noted that customer satisfaction was picked up at the Council's monthly meetings with Serco. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged that the grass cutting regime had not been up to standard in recent weeks, however it was hoped that the matter would be addressed in the next Green Book.

Members also discussed long term loans in relation to Victoria Square. In addition, the Executive noted that proposals for Woking Market would be brought to the next Victoria

Square Oversight Panel following concern raised at the potential impact of the Victoria Square development on the Market.

**RESOLVED**

That the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, July 2017, be received.

Reason: To manage the performance of the Council.

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

**RESOLVED**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items 11 and 12 in view of the nature of the proceedings that, if members of the press and public were present during these items, 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).

#### **11. LAND MANAGEMENT - FORMER PLANETS SITE**

In determining the item, the Executive agreed to set up a cross-party Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group, to be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Cultural and Community Development, which would report back to the Executive.

**RESOLVED**

- That (i) the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, be authorised to approve the amendments to the lease arrangements in respect of the Former Planets site; and
- (ii) a Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group be established of four Members, two Conservatives, one Liberal Democrat and one Labour or Independent.

Reason: To enable effective land management.

#### **12. LAND MANAGEMENT - ACQUISITION OF WOKING TOWN CENTRE PROPERTY**

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

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

Reason: To acquire and improve the setting of an important asset in Woking Town Centre to support the economic vibrancy of the town centre and to contribute to a key objective in the Council's Medium

Term Financial Strategy to protect services for Woking residents.

**This document was published on Friday 15 September 2017 and the decisions within it will be implemented on Monday 25 September 2017, subject to call-in.**

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and ended at 8.10 pm

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

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