

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held on 26 February 2018

Present:

	Cllr I Johnson (Chairman)
	Cllr K M Davis (Vice-Chair)
Cllr J E Bond	Cllr M I Raja
Cllr J Kingsbury	Cllr C Rana
Cllr R Mohammed	

Also Present: Councillors Mrs B A Hunwicks and K Howard.

Absent: Councillors Mrs H J Addison, A-M Barker and G G Chrystie.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday, 22 January 2018 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business to discuss.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor Mrs B A Hunwicks and Councillor J Kingsbury declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items under which the Thamesway Group of Companies was discussed, arising from their positions as Directors of the Thamesway Group of Companies. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor J Kingsbury declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items under which the Victoria Square Development was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Victoria Square Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, and Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, declared an interest in any items under which the Thamesway Group of Companies was discussed, arising from their positions as Directors of the Thamesway Group of Companies. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, declared an interest in any items under which the Victoria Square Development was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Victoria Square Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

4. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman referred the Committee to the forward work programme and confirmed that representatives for Network Rail and South Western Trains would be attending the June 2018 meeting of the Committee. Members were encouraged to attend the forthcoming site visit to Sheets Heath which look at the work being done in the Borough to preserve the local Heaths.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be noted.

5. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION

The Chairman referred the Members of the Committee to the December 'Green Book' and drew attention to the information on the number of households in B&B, temporary accommodation and non-secure accommodation. It was noted that management action was needed to look at the longer term options for assisting those in temporary accommodation. However, the Chairman added that the significant work the Council was doing in order to increase social and affordable housing in the Borough should be recognised, together with the efforts to tackle homelessness.

The Chairman referred to the acquisition of 7 Hillview Road and was advised by the Chief Executive that the property had been acquired to enable the construction of an administration block in support of the Hospice.

RESOLVED

That the Green Book be noted.

6. WOKING 2050 AND CLIMATE CHANGE AGENDA UPDATE

The Committee received a presentation on Climate Change and Woking 2050 from Tracey Haskins, Green Infrastructure Manager, and Lara Beattie, Senior Policy Officer. The presentation set out the work being undertaken across the Borough including details of a number of projects. Councillor Hunwicks welcomed the opportunity to discuss the work of the Council on tackling climate change and suggested that the regular updates prepared for the Climate Change Task Group could in future be sent to all Members for information.

The Committee discussed a range of matters arising from the presentation, including the provision of future flood prevention measures in Byfleet, the progress of the rain water harvesting project, managing the parking standards for the Borough, and the issues caused by overpopulation. The Committee was advised that the proposals for flood prevention measures were being drawn up in consultation with the Environment Agency which was undertaking a hydrology study of the area. It was stressed that the Council had made a commitment to improve flood defences and that proposals would emerge from the work being undertaken by the Environment Agency. A report on the rain water project would be considered at the next meeting of the Climate Change Working Group.

Councillor Raja expressed concern that the existing cycle network would not be fit for purpose in thirty years time and proposed that schemes such as the Sheerwater

Regeneration should include improved designs for cycle paths. Councillor Hunwicks suggested that the points raised could be considered by the Climate Change Working Group.

The Chairman thanked Tracey and Lara for their informative presentation.

7. WASTE AND RECYCLING CONTRACT - UPDATE

The Committee welcomed Matt Smyth of Joint Waste Solutions, Richard Bisset, Contracts and Projects Support Manager, Tom Carter from Amey and Mark Stammer from Amey. The Committee were shown a presentation which outlined the history of the joint waste contract, its governance arrangements, the performance in Woking to-date, the background to Amey and the next steps.

The Committee welcomed the presentation and noted the high standard of service which had been achieved by Amey. In particular, it was noted that any issues raised by residents had been dealt with very quickly and positively. The Chairman asked whether any materials were shipped abroad for recycling from Surrey and enquired after the fate of the collection vehicles used by Biffa under the previous contract. The Committee was advised that the vehicles had been retained by Biffa for use elsewhere. In regard to the recycling material collected, until recently the majority of waste paper and plastics had been transported to China for recycling. However, China had introduced new quality standards which had meant that those materials would no longer be accepted. The value of recycled paper and plastics had fallen accordingly and new opportunities were being pursued. More local recycling facilities were required but the identification of suitable sites in Surrey was proving to be very difficult.

The Chief Executive advised the Committee of proposals to install a waste reduction unit as part of the Victoria Square development which would be able to take all the waste from the development and reduce it to a material which could be returned to its original state of crude oil. Under the proposals, no waste would leave the site for recycling elsewhere. It was hoped that the unit would be operational by the end of March 2018.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for attending the meeting and for giving a detailed and positive presentation on the waste and recycling contract.

8. AIR QUALITY MONITORING

Emma Bourne, the Authority's Environmental Health Manager, introduced a report on the work undertaken by the Council to monitor the air quality, using over 30 monitoring points across the Borough to measure nitrogen dioxide (NO_x) levels. Each year the Council was required to report the air quality findings to DEFRA. Where there was the potential for the levels to exceed the standards set by the Government, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) would be declared. At present, Woking had two such sites, one at Anchor Hill and one along Guildford Road.

Councillor Bond raised concerns expressed by residents in the properties along Parvis Road over the level of NO_x and asked whether the monitoring points should be located closer to the roads. The Committee was advised that the level of NO_x fell sharply moving away from roads and that it was generally in areas where the properties were close to the roadside that an AQMA was declared. In light of residents concerns, the placement of the monitors along Parvis Road had been reviewed and an additional monitor had been

installed. It was confirmed that there were no concerns over the levels in and around Parvis Road to indicate that residents were subjected to levels of NOx higher than the standards set.

In regard to Anchor Hill, Emma advised that the phasing of the traffic lights had been changed which had led to an improvement to traffic flow and a reduction in NOx levels. Other efforts to reduce NOx levels were discussed and the Committee was advised that limits were placed on the engines of vehicles operated by taxi drivers in Woking.

Councillor Raja referred to the Sheerwater Regeneration scheme and advised that residents were concerned over the level of air pollution that would be caused by the movement of construction vehicles. Councillor Raja further enquired as to whether any monitors were currently located in the Sheerwater area. Emma advised that all major construction projects were monitored by the Council and that the Council operated a free subscription scheme for residents through which advice and warnings on air quality were provided. It was confirmed that there were a number of monitoring points across the Sheerwater area, including along Albert Drive, Woodham Lane and at the Lion Retail Park.

The Chairman thanked Emma for her comprehensive report and presentation.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9. BASINGSTOKE CANAL PROPOSALS UPDATE

The Chief Executive introduced a report on the progress achieved in seeking improvements to the Woking stretch of the Basingstoke Canal. A town quay was proposed and agreement had been reached with Surrey County Council, as joint canal owner, to undertake the work during the year alongside the Woking Town Centre Integrated Transport project. A further proposal was being considered to create a towpath link bridge by the Chobham Bridge. Planning applications had been submitted for both the link bridge and artwork alongside the Canal, though were yet to be determined.

The Committee was also advised that the possibility of purchasing a barge to create a Lightbox Barge, within which would be an exhibition space, was being investigated, though this was unlikely to be achieved until 2019/2020. Plans were also being drawn up for the creation of a Canal Boat basin and a report would be brought to a future meeting of the Executive if proposal was found to be feasible.

Work had been undertaken to develop proposals for a pedestrian/cyclist bridge alongside the Lockfield Drive road bridge. A bid for funding would be submitted in March, the outcome of which was expected by June 2018.

The possibility of pursuing the return of the annual Easter Canal parade with the Basingstoke Canal Society was raised, though the Committee was advised that, due to a lack of dredging, accessing the Canal was very difficult. It was suggested that the possibility of funding dredging work could be explored as part of the Council's ambitions for the Canal, together with options to undertake litter clearing of the Canal banks. The Committee supported the proposals and it was

RESOLVED

- That (i) the report be received and the positive progress be noted; and
- (ii) Officers investigate the feasibility of undertaking dredging work along the Woking section of the Basingstoke Canal and litter clearing of the canal banks.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 9.38 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____