

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WOKING

held on 4 April 2019

Present:

Cllr W P Forster (Chair)
Cllr Mrs B A Hunwicks (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Mrs H J Addison	Cllr I Eastwood
Cllr M Ali	Cllr D Harlow
Cllr S Ashall	Cllr K Howard
Cllr A Azad	Cllr D E Hughes
Cllr T Aziz	Cllr S Hussain
Cllr A-M Barker	Cllr I Johnson
Cllr D J Bittleston	Cllr C S Kemp
Cllr J E Bond	Cllr N Martin
Cllr A J Boote	Cllr R Mohammed
Cllr A C L Bowes	Cllr L M N Morales
Cllr M A Bridgeman	Cllr M I Raja
Cllr G G Chrystie	Cllr C Rana
Cllr G S Cundy	Cllr M A Whitehand
Cllr K M Davis	

Also Present: Claire Storey, Independent Co-Opted Member

Absent: Councillors L S Lyons

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Lyons and Ray Morgan, Chief Executive.

2. MINUTES.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 13 February 2019 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.

The Mayor reported that the annual Civic Ball had been a great success and had raised over £7,000 for the Mayoral Charity, the York Road Project. The Mayor had also attended the annual pancake race in aid of Woking ShopMobility and, together with the Mayoress, had started the Surrey half marathon.

The Mayor had taken part in the Junior Citizen Programme and, following the devastating terrorist attack in New Zealand, had visited the Shah Jahan Mosque to offer his support and condolences.

4. URGENT BUSINESS.

The Mayor ruled that the following item was to be taken as Urgent Business in view of the need to take the decision before the next meeting of the Council.

Seating Plan

The Mayor reported that one item of Urgent Business had arisen in light of the recent decision by Councillor Chrystie to resign from the Conservative Group and join the Liberal Democrat Group. The need for the matter to be considered under Urgent Business was to approve a revised seating plan for Council, a copy of which was tabled.

RESOLVED

That the revised seating plan be agreed.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, the Leader of the Council, Councillor D J Bittleston, Cllr A Azad, Councillor D Harlow, Councillor Mrs B A Hunwicks and Councillor C S Kemp 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 D Bittleston 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 the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D Bittleston declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items under which Rutland Woking Limited was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Rutland Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor G S Cundy declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items under which the Brookwood Cemetery was discussed, arising from his position as a Director of Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited, Brookwood Park Limited and Brookwood Cemetery Limited. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, and Head of Democratic and Legal Services, Peter Bryant, 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 Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, declared an interest in any items under which Export House was discussed, arising from his positions as a Director of Export House Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, and Head of Democratic and Legal Services, Peter Bryant, declared an interest in any items under which Brookwood Cemetery was discussed, arising from their positions as Directors of Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited, Brookwood Park Limited and Brookwood Cemetery Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Head of Democratic and Legal Services, Peter Bryant, and the Finance Director, Leigh Clarke, declared an interest in any items under which Dukes Court was discussed, arising from their positions as Directors of Dukes Court Owner T S a r l. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Procedure Rules, the Head of Democratic and Legal Services, Peter Bryant, declared an interest in any items under which Rutland Woking Limited was discussed, arising from his position as Council appointed alternate Director of Rutland Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor I Johnson declared an interest in Item 10 – Annual Report by Council Representatives on Outside Bodies – in respect of the reference to Citizens Advice Woking arising from his wife's employment by the charity. The interest was such that Councillor Johnson would leave the Council Chamber if there was any discussion of Citizens Advice Woking.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor R Mohammed declared a pecuniary interest in Item 6 – Questions – in respect of question 10 and reference to taxi licensing. The interest arose from Councillor Mohammed's ownership of a taxi licence. The interest was such that Councillor Mohammed left the Council Chamber during the discussion.

6. QUESTIONS.

Copies of questions submitted under Standing Order 8.1 together with draft replies were laid upon the table. The replies were confirmed by Members of the Executive, supplementary questions were asked and replies given.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES. WBC19-012

Claire Storey moved and Councillor Whitehand seconded the reception and adoption of the report and recommendations of the meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee held on 7 March 2019.

Councillor Bittleston moved and Councillor Azad seconded the reception and adoption of the report and recommendations of the meeting of the Executive held on 28 March 2019.

Standards and Audit Committee - 7 March 2019

Members' Code of Conduct - Protocol for Complaints Submitted by Members. STA19-001

The Council had before it the recommendations of the Standards and Audit Committee for the adoption of a protocol that provided for Members' complaints against other Members to be confidential to the Members concerned and limited the number of persons who received notification under the Council's arrangements for dealing with standards allegations under the Localism Act. It was noted that the draft protocol had been the subject of a

consultation with all the Councillors, the Independent Co-Opted Member and the Independent Person.

In accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the recommendations were recorded.

In favour: Councillors H Addison, S Ashall, A Azad, A-M Barker, D Bittleston, A C L Bowes, G Chrystie, G Cundy, K Davis, I Eastwood, D Harlow, K Howard, D Hughes, Mrs B Hunwicks, S Hussain, I Johnson, C Kemp, N Martin, R Mohammed, L Morales, C Rana and M Whitehand.

Total in favour: 22

Against: Councillors J Bond, A Boote and M Bridgeman.

Total against: 3

Present not voting: Councillors M Ali, T Aziz and M I Raja

Total present not voting: 3

The recommendations were therefore carried by 22 votes in favour to 3 votes against.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the draft Protocol appended to the report be adopted; and
(ii) the adopted Protocol be subject to Paragraph 2.6 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

Executive - 28 March 2019

Notice of Motion - Cllr M Ali - Installation of Security Cameras. EXE19-028

The next item dealt with a Notice of Motion from Councillor Ali seeking the installation of security cameras in areas in the Borough outside the town centre to tackle flytipping and drug abuse, including Walton Road alleyways, Princess Road, sites in Sheerwater and other affected areas. The matter had been brought to the meeting of the Executive but had not been discussed as Councillor Ali had not been in attendance. No recommendation was therefore before the Council. Councillor Mrs Hunwicks, Portfolio Holder, introduced the item.

The Mayor provided Councillor Ali an opportunity to move the Motion in the absence of a recommendation before the Council. Councillor Ali chose not to speak and it was therefore

RESOLVED

That the motion be not supported.

Notice of Motion - Cllr M Ali - Rents and Building Insurance for Local Businesses. EXE19-032

(NOTE: In light of the discussion and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor Hussain declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item as a landlord of business premises, albeit not a Council property. The interest was such that speaking and voting on the item were permissible.)

The Council considered a Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Ali seeking a review of the increases in rent and building insurance for local businesses following concerns raised by Council business tenants. The Motion had been referred to the Executive at its meeting on 28 March 2019 but had not been discussed as Councillor Ali had not been in attendance. Accordingly, no recommendation had been drawn up by the Executive. Councillor Azad, Portfolio Holder, introduced the item.

Councillor Ali was asked by the Mayor whether he wished for the Motion to be considered by the Council in its original form. Councillor Ali moved and Councillor Raja seconded the Motion and Councillor Ali spoke in support of the proposal.

The proposal was debated by the Council before Councillor Ali was given the opportunity to sum up his arguments in favour of a review. The Mayor referred the Council to the proposal set out in the Motion and in accordance with Standing Order 10.8, the names of Members voting for and against the Motion were recorded.

In favour: Councillors M Ali, T Aziz, J Bond, A Boote, M Bridgeman and M I Raja.

Total in favour: 6

Against: Councillors H Addison, S Ashall, A Azad, D Bittleston, A Bowes, G Chrystie, G Cundy, K Davis, D Harlow, Mrs B Hunwicks, S Hussain, I Johnson, C Kemp, N Martin, R Mohammed, C Rana and M Whitehand.

Total against: 17

Present not voting: Councillors A-M Barker, I Eastwood, K Howard, D Hughes and L Morales,

Total present not voting: 5

The motion was therefore lost by 6 votes in favour to 17 votes against.

RESOLVED

That the motion be not supported.

Contaminated Land Strategy. EXE19-013

The Council had before it the recommendations of the Executive proposing the adoption of the Contaminated Land Strategy following a technical consultation. The recommendation was presented to the Council by Councillor Mrs Hunwicks, Portfolio Holder.

RESOLVED

That the Contaminated Land Strategy (2019-2024), attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

Medium Term Financial Strategy. EXE19-034

The Members were asked to consider the recommendations of the Executive in respect of the report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Strategy had been adopted in October 2018 and the report considered by the Executive had provided an update on the outlook, extending the forecast to 2023/24. Councillor Azad, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Financial Planning and Policy, introduced the recommendation to the Council.

The Council discussed a number of areas covered by the report including Brookwood Cemetery, Victoria Square and valuations in general. The points were addressed by Councillor Azad before the Members were asked to agree the recommendations before them.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) report be approved; and
- (ii) subject to appropriate due diligence, Brookwood Cemetery be acquired by the Council to be operated as a direct Council service.

8. SHEERWATER REGENERATION SCHEME - FUNDING REQUEST.

The Council received a report which provided an update on the Sheerwater Regeneration scheme and sought approval for the release of funding for the first phase of the residential element of the regeneration. The details of the proposals were introduced by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bittleston.

The Members discussed a number of elements of the proposals including the division of responsibility between the Sheerwater Regeneration Oversight Panel and the Sheerwater Regeneration Delivery Board which would replace the existing Sheerwater Regeneration Project Board, and the arrangements for the athletics track and the football pitch. It was noted that two planning applications for the scheme, one proposing minor but material amendments to the existing hybrid planning permission, the other a hybrid application seeking part outline planning permission, part full planning permission for the scheme, were to be considered at the next meeting of the Planning Committee.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the position regarding implementation of the Sheerwater regeneration scheme be noted;
- (ii) a short term loan facility of £42m, on terms previously approved by Council for Sheerwater, be released to Thamesway Developments Limited to enable the first residential phase, 'Purple' to be implemented;
- (iii) on completion of the construction of the 'Purple' phase, a 50 year loan facility of up to £48.4m be made available to

Thameswey Housing Limited at a 0.5% margin over the Council's borrowing costs;

- (iv) a Sheerwater Regeneration Delivery Board be created to replace the existing Sheerwater Regeneration Project Board, and that all Canalside Councillors will be allowed to attend and contribute to the Board, and
- (v) the role of the Sheerwater Regeneration Oversight Panel be refined to focus on the social, environmental and economic issues for the residents and businesses in Sheerwater, both inside and outside the red-line area.

9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE. WBC19-009

Councillor Johnson, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, introduced the annual report of the Committee, outlining the key activities undertaken during the year. A wide range of interesting topics had been covered by the Committee over the year and Councillor Johnson thanked Councillor Hughes for her supportive role over the year as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

10. ANNUAL REPORT BY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES. WBC19-010

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bittleston, introduced the report and welcomed the contributions from the Council's representatives on outside bodies.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

11. ANNUAL REPORT ON MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT. WBC19-011

Councillor Kemp, Lead Councillor for Member Learning and Development, presented the annual report on the Council's learning and development activities over the past year. It was noted that the Council's Policy for Member learning and development had been reviewed and was before the Council for approval.

RESOLVED

That (i) the Elected Member learning and development activities of 2018-19 be noted; and

- (ii) the updated Policy for Elected Member Learning and Development, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be adopted.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION.

No notices of motion had been received.

13. VOTE OF THANKS

The Leader of the Council thanked the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their service over the past year and expressed his appreciation of the work undertaken by Officers and Councillors.

It was noted that Councillor Hilary Addison, Councillor Ashley Bowes and Councillor Ian Eastwood would be standing down as Councillors at the next Election after serving the Borough for 8 years, 11 years and 28 years respectively. The Council recorded their thanks for the outstanding roles they had taken on during their terms of office, in particular Councillor Eastwood who had served on the Council since 1991 and whose roles had included that of Mayor. The three Councillors responded to the Council, referring to some of the outstanding achievements of the Council during their terms of office.

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC.

The Mayor moved and Councillor Mr Hunwicks seconded that the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item.

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 14 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).

**15. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE. WBC19-013
Notice of Motion - Cllr M Ali - Partnership Working and Project Management. EXE19-029**

The Notice of Motion before the Council had been received from Councillor Ali and had been referred to the Executive at its meeting on 28 March 2019. The Executive, however, had not discussed the Motion in view of the absence of Councillor Ali and there was therefore no recommendation before the Council.

Councillor Ali moved and Councillor Aziz seconded that the Motion should be supported as originally submitted. Councillor Ali spoke in support of the Motion before the matter was opened up to debate.

RESOLVED

That the Motion be not supported.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm
and ended at 10.50 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: _____