

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE

held on 11 October 2018
Present:

Cllr D J Bittleston (Chairman)
Cllr A Azad (Vice-Chair)

Cllr A C L Bowes Cllr Mrs B A Hunwicks
Cllr K M Davis Cllr C S Kemp
Cllr D Harlow

Also Present: Councillors S Ashall, A-M Barker, J E Bond, K Howard, D E Hughes and L M N Morales.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 September 2018 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

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, the Leader of the Council, Councillor D J Bittleston, Councillor A Azad, Councillor Mrs B A Hunwicks and Councillor C S Kemp declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute item 6 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update, minute item 8 – Sythwood Residential Units, minute item 10 – Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy, minute item 11 – Affordable Housing Expenditure Update, minute item 12 – Kestrel Way Industrial Units, minute item 13 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, minute item 14 – Monitoring Reports – Projects and minute item 16 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update arising from their positions as Directors of the Thamesway Group of Companies. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor Mrs B A Hunwicks declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item which referred to flooding issues around Old Woking or Gresham Mill arising from her residing in the area. The interest was such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, and Head of Democratic and Legal Services, Peter Bryant, declared an interest in minute item 6 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update, minute item 8 – Sythwood Residential Units, minute item 10 – Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy, minute item 11 – Affordable Housing Expenditure Update, minute item 12 – Kestrel Way Industrial Units, minute item 13 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, minute item 14 – Monitoring Reports – Projects and minute item 16 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update arising from their positions as Directors of the Thamesway Group of Companies. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan declared an interest in minute item 6 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update, minute item 13 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, minute item 14 – Monitoring Reports – Projects and minute item 16 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update arising from his position as a Director of Victoria Square Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, and Head of Democratic and Legal Services, Peter Bryant, declared an interest in minute item 6 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update, minute item 13 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, minute item 14 – Monitoring Reports – Projects and minute item 16 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update arising from their positions as Directors of Woking Necropolis and Mausoleum Limited, Brookwood Park Limited and Brookwood Cemetery Limited. The interests were such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, and the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, declared an interest in minute item 6 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update, minute item 13 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, minute item 14 – Monitoring Reports – Projects and minute item 16 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update arising from their positions as Directors of Export House Limited. The interests were such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, and the Head of Democratic and Legal Services, Peter Bryant, declared an interest in minute item 6 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update, minute item 13 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, minute item 14 – Monitoring Reports – Projects and minute item 16 – Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update arising from their positions as Directors of Dukes Court Owner T S a r l. The interests were such that speaking was permissible.

5. QUESTIONS

The Chairman reported that three questions had been submitted by Mr Kevin Gill under Section 3 of the Executive Procedure Rules regarding play and recreational provision in the Sutton Green area and the Play Strategy for Woking 2007 - 2012. A copy of the questions together with the replies was before the Executive. The Chairman confirmed the replies and advised that Mr Gill would be sent a copy of the replies to his questions.

**6. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) INVESTMENT STRATEGY UPDATE
EXE18-031**

Following approval of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) by Council in April 2018, the Executive received a report which provided an update on the outlook and which recommended to Council a strategy to continue to move towards a sustainable medium term position. The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Financial Planning and Policy, Councillor Azad, reported that the Council had made good progress in securing income to reduce cost pressures and lost sources of funding. The Executive noted that the MTFS assumed continued funding reductions throughout the period to 2021/22. Councillor Azad explained that the MTFS recommended further investment in strategic property and detailed proposals were set out in the confidential report to be considered under Part II of the agenda.

Regarding the proposed acquisition of CMS House, Officers advised that it was an investment property and no development was planned at the current stage. Following a question concerning the next Business Rates pilot, the Executive was informed that Surrey County Council (SCC) had submitted a strong case for delivering a successful pilot and that the result of the bid was awaited.

Councillor Barker questioned the options for music, orchestra and dance groups when the lease for HG Wells ended in 2020. The Executive was informed that Officers had been engaging with community users of HG Wells and that recommendations would be received by the Executive following the work undertaken to identify needs.

Discussion ensued on SCC support and it was noted that the MTFS assumed that Woking would lose its remaining income in 2019/20, with the exception of waste funding which was assumed to be lost in 2021/22. The risk of SCC withdrawing its funding to community and voluntary groups in Woking was raised and Officers advised that a risk analysis was being undertaken.

Following a question regarding leases expiring during the MTFS period, the Executive was advised that risks would largely be mitigated through the use of reserves whilst properties were re-let.

The Executive discussed the Hoe Valley Flood Alleviation and Enhancement Scheme and it was noted that it had not been possible to secure grant funding for the whole scheme as yet. However, Officers would continue to seek grant funding. Schemes which could be delivered in the current Municipal Year were highlighted, such as Rainwater Gardens in Sheerwater. Councillor Hughes asked whether the results of the Hoe Valley Scheme consultation had been published and Officers agreed to check that Councillors had been made aware of the results.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That (i) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Investment Strategy Update report be approved and the Executive be authorised to continue to prepare an Investment Strategy for future consideration which would generate sufficient income to avoid reduction in services for local people; and

RESOLVED

That (ii) the acquisition of CMS House, initially funded by the opportunity purchases budget, be allocated to the Investment Programme MTFS Investment Strategy budget.

Reason: The decision is sought to set the framework for Officers to develop the detailed budget for 2019/20 and further proposals for consideration, in due course, by the Council to ensure the medium term financial stability of the Council in the context of its objective to support growth and to maintain services for local people.

7. PROPOSED RESTRICTIONS TO CONTROL THE REPAIR OF VEHICLES ON THE PUBLIC HIGHWAY EXE18-061

The Executive received a report which sought approval of the Executive to recommend to Council the introduction of a fixed penalty notice for nuisance parking offences relating to repairing a car on the road in the course of a business. It was confirmed that the proposals included individuals where the carrying out of restricted works gave reasonable cause for annoyance to persons in the vicinity. Following a question, the Executive was advised that there was no legislation preventing a car being legally parked on the highway which had been, or was awaiting being, repaired at a garage.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the level of fixed penalty notices shall be set at £100 per penalty notice where it is considered that a person has committed an offence under Part 2 of section 4 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

Reason: The proposed penalty of £100 is in accordance with the requirements of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

8. SYTHWOOD RESIDENTIAL UNITS EXE18-116

The Chairman advised that the item had been deferred to the Executive on 22 November 2018.

9. YORK ROAD PROJECT EXE18-117

The Chairman advised that the item had been deferred to the Executive on 22 November 2018.

10. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY EXE18-049

The Executive received a report which sought approval of the Executive to recommend to Council the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bittleston, reported that all Conservative Leaders' had been asked by Lord Porter of Spalding, the Chairman of the Local Government Association (LGA) to co-sign a letter to the Government asking the Prime Minister and the Chancellor to remove the HRA cap straightaway. The Leader added the caveat that removing the HRA cap was only helpful if the Council was able to mitigate the position with the Right to Buy.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy report be approved.

Reason: To approve the proposed use of HRA resources and set a framework for preparing the detailed revenue and Housing Investment Programme budgets for 2019/20 onwards.

11. AFFORDABLE HOUSING EXPENDITURE UPDATE EXE18-048

The Executive received a report which provided an update on the expenditure and activities undertaken in order to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Borough. Officers highlighted two amendments to the resolves before the Executive. Firstly, that resolves (iii) and (iv) would be subject to planning permission, and secondly, that the reference to the Additional Borrowing bid should be removed from resolve (iv) and be replaced with 'subject to available borrowing'. The Executive agreed the amended resolves.

Following a query regarding the figures on current housing needs in the Borough in the report, the Executive was informed that the statistics and advice had been taken from professionals and the information had been used to inform the development within Sheerwater and in the Town Centre. The Leader agreed to ask Officers to present the figures to the Housing Task Group.

The Leader commented that the Council had a great track record on the provision of affordable homes and stated that 40% of the 1,065 homes provided over the last 4 years had been affordable. Regarding Brookwood Farm, the Executive was advised that the planning permission had provided £6m for off-site provision of affordable homes and the funds were being used at a site in Brookwood Lye Road. It was noted that the current application at Brookwood Lye Road included 76 affordable homes on-site, subject to planning permission.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the land at the eastern end of Monument Way West be appropriated from the General Fund to the HRA as detailed in the report;
- (ii) all Affordable Housing Section 106 contributions held by the Council are to be used on HRA or General Fund affordable housing developments;

- (iii) the Strategic Asset Manager be authorised to implement the Old Woking Sheltered Housing Development based on a budget of £15,000,000, subject to planning permission; and
- (iv) authority be given to the Strategic Asset Manager to implement the Monument Way Development, subject to available borrowing, based on a budget of £14,871,000, subject to planning permission.

Reason: To approve proposals to develop additional housing for the Housing Revenue Account.

12. KESTREL WAY INDUSTRIAL UNITS EXE18-115

The Executive received a report which sought approval for the development of the Industrial Units at Kestrel Way by Rutland Woking Limited (RWL) and an Investment Programme Budget, financed by Loan, of £3.5m. Councillor Mrs Hunwicks drew attention to the concerns of local residents and the Executive agreed to add an additional resolve in order to ensure that appropriate acoustic protection was included to nearby residential properties in consultation with residents.

Subject to Executive approval of the proposal, it was noted that negotiations would be held with the charity interested in using Unit 2 and that a report would be submitted to the Executive for consideration at its meeting on 13 December 2018.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the development by Rutland Woking Limited of Industrial Units at Kestrel Way be approved;
- (ii) an Investment Programme Budget of £3.5m, to be financed by a 50 years PWLB Annuity Loan, be approved; and
 - (iii) appropriate acoustic protection be included to nearby residential properties in consultation with residents.

Reason: To provide additional industrial units in support of local business activity.

13. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION

The Executive considered the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book), August 2018. The number of empty properties brought back into use was raised and the Executive was informed that progress had been delayed due to a focus on the new licensing scheme. It was confirmed that empty homes had been re-prioritised.

Councillor Hughes raised a query regarding help for Sheerwater residents whose benefits could be reduced if the Council provided financial help for new fixtures and fittings when they moved. Officers advised that such compensation payments should not affect benefits and asked Councillor Hughes to direct those residents concerned to raise the matter with Officers.

On page 10 of the Green Book regarding waste and cleanliness, it was highlighted that the rejection rate figure was missing. It was agreed that the missing figure would be circulated to Members. Following a question, it was confirmed that postponed waste collection routes were not counted in missed bins figures. The Executive was advised that postponed routes were logged with Joint Waste Solutions (JWS) and would usually be re-routed the following day.

Members also discussed hard to let properties, the number of rough sleepers and New Vision Homes (NVH) urgent repairs.

RESOLVED

That the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, August 2018, be received.

Reason: To manage the performance of the Council.

14. MONITORING REPORTS - PROJECTS EXE18-032

The Executive received a quarterly monitoring report on the progress of projects in the interest of financial prudence and to ensure open and transparent corporate governance. Regarding Leisure Lagoon Modernisation, Officers reported that installation of the new flumes had been delayed due to the need to replace the concrete deck which connected the stairs to the flumes. Following a question regarding West Byfleet Play Area Improvements, the Executive was informed that the Portfolio Holder was meeting with Officers the following day to discuss the project with a view to the tender process commencing the following week. The Portfolio Holder would also be discussing the tennis courts at Byfleet and West Byfleet with Officers.

Members also discussed Play Area and Skate Park Repairs and, Civic Offices Accommodation Strategy.

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

Reason: To monitor the position of active projects on SharePoint.

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items 16 to 18 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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, to the Local Government Act 1972.

Paragraph 1 – Information relating to any individual.

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

**16. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) INVESTMENT STRATEGY UPDATE
EXE18-120**

An amendment was made to the recommendation to Council by Officers at the meeting. The Executive agreed the amended recommendation as set out in the confidential minute.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the recommendations of the Executive set out in the confidential minute be resolved by Council.

Reason: To support the economic development strategy and investment strategy of the Council to secure the economic vitality of the Borough.

17. SCHOOL PLACE PROVISION EXE18-027

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the recommendations of the Executive set out in the confidential minute be resolved by Council.

Reason: To enable the provision of additional school places to meet local need.

18. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH EXE18-122

The Executive agreed an amended resolve as set out in the confidential minute.

RESOLVED

That the amended resolve set out in the confidential minute be agreed.

Reason: To make the necessary arrangements to award the Freedom of the Borough.

<p>This document was published on Friday, 12 October 2018 and the decisions within it will be implemented on Monday 22 October 2018, subject to call-in.</p>

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm
and ended at 9.28 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____