

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE

held on 11 July 2019
Present:

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

Cllr K M Davis Cllr C S Kemp
Cllr D Harlow

Also Present: Councillors A-M Barker, G G Chrystie, W P Forster, K Howard and
D E Hughes.

Absent: Councillor G S Cundy.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 27 June 2019
be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G S Cundy.

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 D Harlow and Councillor C S Kemp declared a
non-pecuniary interest in minute item 6 - Temporary Accommodation, minute item 9 -
Equalities Annual Report – 2019 and minute item 11 - Temporary Accommodation 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 D J Bittleston declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute item 8 - Royal Horticultural Society (Wisley) – Application for Financial Assistance, arising from his Membership of the Royal Horticultural Society. The interest was such that speaking and voting was permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor K M Davis declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute item 8 - Royal Horticultural Society (Wisley) – Application for Financial Assistance, arising from his wife and daughter's Memberships of the Royal Horticultural Society. The interest was not a formal interest under the Members' Code of Conduct so speaking and voting was permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D E Hughes and Councillor K Howard declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute item 8 - Royal Horticultural Society (Wisley) – Application for Financial Assistance, arising from their Memberships of the Royal Horticultural Society. The interests were 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 a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 6 – Temporary Accommodation, minute item 9 - Equalities Annual Report – 2019 and minute item 11 – Temporary Accommodation 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 Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, and the Head of Democratic and Legal Services, Peter Bryant, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 8 - Royal Horticultural Society (Wisley) – Application for Financial Assistance, arising from their Memberships of the Royal Horticultural Society. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

5. QUESTIONS

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

6. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION EXE19-041

Councillor D Harlow, Portfolio Holder for Housing Services, introduced the report and informed the Executive that a review had been undertaken of the Council's current temporary accommodation schemes which had identified that urgent and significant investment was required to refurbish the accommodation to an acceptable standard. The Portfolio Holder explained that the report sought approval of the Executive to recommend to Council the acquisition and conversion of a Woking town centre site for use as temporary accommodation. In addition, the report also recommended to Council a proposal to improve the housing standards of the Council's current temporary accommodation properties and the disposal of 37 St John's Road which had formerly been used as temporary accommodation.

Following a question regarding the estimated valuation of 37 St John's Road, it was noted that Officers would be expected to obtain best value for the site. Regarding the proposal to undertake refurbishment of Claremont Avenue temporary accommodation properties rather than to rebuild, the Portfolio Holder advised that the refurbished accommodation would offer vital short to medium term availability. The Executive was informed that a full strategic review of the Council's temporary accommodation would be undertaken within two years of the new town centre scheme, subject to approval of the proposed acquisition.

The Chairman highlighted an amendment to recommendation (iv) in order to make clear that both the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services and the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management would be consulted by the Director of Housing if it was necessary to proceed with the purchase of an alternative town centre site for use as temporary accommodation in the event that the acquisition of the identified site fell through.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) **the acquisition and conversion of a Woking town centre site for the use as temporary accommodation be approved for a total project cost of circa £4,600,000;**
- (ii) **the proposal to improve the housing standards of the Council's current temporary accommodation properties, at a total cost of circa £152,000, be approved to ensure that the provision is fit for purpose;**
- (iii) **the vacant property at 37 St Johns Road (formerly used as temporary accommodation) be disposed of and the capital receipt re-invested towards implementing recommendations (i) and (ii) above;**
- (iv) **in the event that the acquisition of the identified site falls through, the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services and the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management, be authorised to identify and proceed with the purchase of an alternative town centre site for use as temporary accommodation, providing the financial business case is broadly similar; and**
- (v) **the Director of Housing be authorised to take all necessary actions to achieve the outcomes referred to in (i) – (iv) above.**

Reason: To enable the Council to provide good quality, local short-term accommodation to households facing homelessness in the Borough.

7. WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY EXE19-036

The Executive received a report which sought approval of the Executive to recommend to Council the adoption of a Street Naming and Numbering (SNN) Policy for Woking Borough Council. The Executive noted that the Council had a statutory responsibility to assign addresses to properties in the Borough. It was noted that the Policy provided clear guidelines for both residents and the Council, and would ensure a concise and consistent approach to address management. The importance of maintaining the uniqueness of addresses for emergency services was highlighted. Members discussed the street name guidelines set out in paragraph 3.3 of Appendix 1 to the report.

Following a suggestion that numbers be added to house names in order to assist emergency services and deliveries, Officers advised that such a request would cause disruption to residents as it would require residents to change their personal details.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their hard work to create the first Street Naming and Numbering Policy for the Council.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) **the Street Naming and Numbering Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;**
- (ii) **the Street Naming and Numbering Policy be published on the Council's website; and**
- (iii) **the Green Infrastructure Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, be given delegated authority to approve future updates to the Street Naming and Numbering Policies to reflect new information.**

Reason: To explain local Addressing requirements in compliance with national guidelines and, with delegated authority, to keep the SNN Policy up to date in the future.

8. ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY (WISLEY) - APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE EXE18-124

The Executive received a report which recommended that funding of £100,000 be awarded to the Royal Horticultural Society (Wisley) towards the cost of the project to build the Centre for Horticultural Science and Learning. Councillor A Azad, Portfolio Holder for Grants to Voluntary and Community Organisations, explained that the new Centre would enhance RHS Wisley's renowned expertise and benefit the local community. Councillor Azad drew attention to the collaborative working relationship with RHS Wisley on the Council's green agenda and climate change in recent years. Community outreach work, for example at Sythwood Children's Centre and in Sheerwater, was also highlighted.

Councillor Forster stated that the Liberal Democrat Group was not supportive of the application due to the organisation's healthy financial position and its location outside of the Borough. Councillor Forster queried how much the work RHS Wisley did on community projects in the Borough cost. Officers advised that the total cost incurred by RHS Wisley in relation to the Sheerwater project was £24,000, of which £10,000 was direct payment and £14,000 was in kind. Officers further advised that other projects in the Borough had not been costed in the same way, however RHS Wisley had dedicated a vast amount of time to organisations within the Borough and had also provided advice and access to RHS Wisley for tailored events, such as Youth Takeover Days for Winston Churchill School and Bishop David Brown School.

The Executive noted that the funding request would come out of the Council's capital grants budget which was a separate fund to the revenue grants budget. The Executive welcomed the transformational project and the Council's valuable collaborative working with RHS Wisley whilst recognising concern expressed at the request to fund an organisation outside of the Borough. It was suggested that reassurance could be obtained from RHS Wisley on its continued investment in the Borough. The Chairman stated that the matter should be a recommendation to Council in order to allow all Members an opportunity to vote on the funding application.

The Chairman commented that consideration could be given to recommending to Council any future significant capital grant funding applications which were outside of the Borough. It was also noted that the Shadow Portfolio Holder would be invited to the initial Officer meeting with the Leader and Portfolio Holder in October to discuss the 2020-21 grant applications.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That funding of £100,000 be awarded from the Community Fund towards the cost of the project to build the Centre of Learning and Science.

Reason: To enable the RHS to continue to grow and invest in the future of its members and horticultural science.

9. EQUALITIES ANNUAL REPORT - 2019 EXE19-018

The Executive received the Equalities Annual Report - 2019 which set out the progress on the equalities agenda. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Kemp, drew attention to the equality actions and achievements during 2018-19 set out in Appendix 2 to the report. Councillor Hughes suggested that it would be useful for the equalities monitoring data in Appendix 3 of the report to include general population figures in order to provide context. The Portfolio Holder commented that the suggestion could be explored going forward and proposed that Councillor Hughes met with himself and Officers to discuss the issue.

Discussion ensued on flexible working. The Deputy Chief Executive reported that the Council's Employment Procedures included flexible working and was intended to be tailored to meet the needs of potential employees in order to ensure that everybody had access to employment opportunities. It was noted that, beyond a requirement for ensuring a minimum number of staff during core hours, there was a high degree of flexibility in order to ensure the Council was an open employer to all.

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

Reason: To meet the requirement to report on annual progress on the equality agenda.

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).

Councillor W P Forster left the Chamber before Part II of the meeting.

11. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION EXE19-042

As Agenda Item 6 - Temporary Accommodation had been agreed under Part I of the agenda, a Part II item was not required on the matter.

12. LAND MANAGEMENT EXE19-044

RESOLVED

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

Reason: To support the Investment Strategy of the Council and future development of this town centre site.

This document was published on Friday 12 July 2019 and the decisions within it will be implemented on Monday 22 July 2019, subject to call-in.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and ended at 7.50 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____