

MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE
EXECUTIVE

held on 10 October 2019
Present:

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

Cllr G S Cundy Cllr D Harlow
Cllr K M Davis Cllr C S Kemp

Also Present: Councillors M Ali, J E Bond, G G Chrystie, W P Forster, K Howard,
D E Hughes, I Johnson and L M N Morales.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 11 July 2019 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

In accordance with Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Leader of the Council ruled that an item of Urgent Business be taken under Part II of the Agenda regarding Asset Management.

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 11 – Recommendation from Climate Change Working Group – Climate Emergency, minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information and minute item 15 – Monitoring Reports – Projects 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 9 – Notice of Motion – Cllr M Ali – Chairmanship of Oversight Panels, minute item 12 – Asset and Facilities Management Contract – Extension Proposals, minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information and minute item 15 – Monitoring Reports – Projects arising from his position as a Director of Victoria Square Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking and voting was permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D J Bittleston declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information and minute item 15 – Monitoring Reports – Projects arising from his position as a Director of Rutland Woking Limited. The interest was such that speaking and voting was permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor G S Cundy declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information and minute item 15 – Monitoring Reports – Projects 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 was permissible.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor I Johnson declared an interest in minute item 5 – Questions and minute item 10 – Notice of Motion – Cllr A-M Barker – Review of Kingfield development stadium capacities arising from his wife's position as Chairman of Woking Football Club. The interest was such that Councillor Johnson left the Chamber during the determination of the item.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor I Johnson declared an interest in minute item 13 – Citizens Advice Woking – Business Plan arising from his wife's employment by Citizens Advice Woking. The interest was such that speaking was permissible, however Councillor Johnson indicated that he would leave the meeting after item 6.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, and Director of Housing, Louise Strongitharm, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 11 – Recommendation from Climate Change Working Group – Climate Emergency, minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information and minute item 15 – Monitoring Reports – Projects 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 a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 9 – Notice of Motion – Cllr M Ali – Chairmanship of Oversight Panels, minute item 12 – Asset and Facilities Management Contract – Extension Proposals, minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information and minute item 15 – Monitoring Reports – Projects 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, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information 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 was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, and the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information and minute item 15 – Monitoring Reports – Projects 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 Finance Director, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 11 – Recommendation from Climate Change Working Group – Climate Emergency and minute item 14 – Performance and Financial Monitoring Information arising from her position as a Director of Dukes Court Owner T S a r l. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Finance Director, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 5 – Questions and minute item 10 – Notice of Motion – Cllr A-M Barker – Review of Kingfield development stadium capacities arising from (i) her husband having a small shareholding in Woking Football Club and (ii) a Council appointed director of Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

In accordance with Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Finance Director, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in minute item 5 – Questions and minute item 10 – Notice of Motion – Cllr A-M Barker – Review of Kingfield development stadium capacities arising from her position as a Director of Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited. The interest was such that speaking was permissible.

5. QUESTIONS

The Chairman welcomed Mr A Caulfield, Ms M van Bellen and Ms K Bowes, who had each submitted questions under Section 3 of the Executive Procedure Rules regarding Woking Football Club, Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited, GolDev Woking Limited and the Council's financing arrangements with companies outside of Thamesway. A copy of the questions together with the replies was before the Executive. The Chairman confirmed the replies, supplementary questions were asked and replies given.

6. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR I JOHNSON - HEATHROW RAIL LINK EXE19-048

At its meeting on 25 July 2019, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor I Johnson

“That this Council:

- 1) Notes the UK Government's invitation in May 2019 for market-led proposals for a new rail link connecting Heathrow Airport from the south and Waterloo and Surrey/Hampshire and this Council's long-term aspiration for a direct rail link to Heathrow Airport;
- 2) supports action to benefit the environment by minimising traffic and pollution by transferring journeys from road to rail;

- 3) welcomes the initiative of Heathrow Southern Railway to propose a project involving a direct rail link from Woking to Heathrow Airport including significant sections via tunnels to minimise environmental impact; and
- 4) asks the Council to write to the Member of Parliament for Woking to press the Secretary of State for Transport to expedite the process of approving a project and selecting a preferred developer, and to advise members when this has been done.”

Councillor Johnson attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. The Executive was supportive of the Motion with the exception of point (3) as it would be considered premature for the Council to declare support for a particular bidder until it had the opportunity to study the bid(s) in detail. The importance of achieving a new direct rail access to Heathrow that stopped at Woking, irrespective of the proposed Heathrow Airport expansion, was raised.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion, as amended by the Executive, be supported as set out below:

“That this Council:

- 1) **Notes the UK Government’s invitation in May 2019 for market-led proposals for a new rail link connecting Heathrow Airport from the south and Waterloo and Surrey/Hampshire and this Council’s long-term aspiration for a direct rail link to Heathrow Airport;**
- 2) **supports action to benefit the environment by minimising traffic and pollution by transferring journeys from road to rail; and**
- 3) **asks the Council to write to the Member of Parliament for Woking to press the Secretary of State for Transport to expedite the process of approving a project and selecting a preferred developer, and to advise members when this has been done.”**

7. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR G CUNDY - INTRODUCE A PLANNING POLICY TO GREEN NEW DEVELOPMENT OVER 15 STOREYS EXE19-049

At its meeting on 25 July 2019, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor G Cundy

“This Council should introduce a policy at the earliest opportunity whereby any new planning application for development over 15 storeys should have at least 20% of its total surface area as living wall, garden terrace or roof garden. Where the Council has ownership, control or interest this policy should be adopted prior to formal policy introduction as a matter of internal policy.”

Councillor Cundy spoke in support of the Motion and welcomed the Officer comment in response to the Motion. Attention was drawn to the Council's commitment to improving the environment and ensuring sustainable development across the Borough, and the Council's existing robust policy on green infrastructure. Councillor Cundy explained that the purpose of the Motion was to open up discussion and agreed with the Officer recommendation that the issues raised by the Motion be deferred to the next Core Strategy review in 2023.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be deferred and considered as part of the future review of the Core Strategy.

8. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR A-M BARKER - FIERY BIRD VENUE/PHOENIX CULTURAL CENTRE EXE19-050

At its meeting on 25 July 2019, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor A-M Barker

"This Council supports the work of the Fiery Bird Venue/Phoenix Cultural Centre CIC and calls for a permanent space to be found for this project in Woking Town Centre."

Councillor Hughes spoke in support of the Motion on behalf of Councillor Barker. The Executive confirmed that it would do all it could to support Fiery Bird in moving to a permanent location. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Kemp, highlighted the work of the Town Centre Community Leisure Task Group and advised that the Council had been working for some time with all the music and community groups which used the HG Wells Conference and Events Centre.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported and the Council notes that action was already in hand.

9. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR M ALI - CHAIRMANSHIP OF OVERSIGHT PANELS EXE19-051

At its meeting on 25 July 2019, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor M Ali

"The democratic system works best with checks and balances and distributed decision making as opposed to centralized and single source authority. As such it's important that the chairs of the oversight panels including but not limited to Victoria Square and Sheerwater are elected by the councillors who are the members of the respective panel and shall as a recommendation not be the relevant portfolio holders. This serves democratic practices best.

Following the approval of this motion immediate election for the chairs of the oversight panels shall be held for the current year (irrespective of any past decisions) and there after every year follow the same pattern as the rest of the committees of the council for election of the chair.

This shall apply to existing and future panels.

In view of the recent meeting of Victoria Square, I request that this motion be determined by the full council now and not referred to the executive.”

Councillor Ali attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. The Executive was of the view that Chairmen of Oversight Panels should continue to be elected by the Members of the respective oversight panel. It was not considered appropriate for there to be a standing recommendation that Portfolio Holders were not elected as Chairmen of Oversight Panels as Panel Members should be free to elect the Member considered to be best suited to act as Chairman.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be not supported.

10. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR A-M BARKER - REVIEW OF KINGFIELD DEVELOPMENT STADIUM CAPACITIES EXE19-052

At its meeting on 25 July 2019, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor A-M Barker

“Council notes that a capacity of 5000 is sufficient for a football team to compete in League Two.

Council calls on officers to assess the effect on current proposals for development at Kingfield of stadium capacities at various levels between 6000 and 8000.”

Councillor Hughes spoke in support of the Motion on behalf of Councillor Barker. Councillor Hughes explained that the Motion had been brought to the Executive mindful of concerns raised by local residents, some Members and some football supporters regarding the proposed development. Members discussed the Officer comment which stated that the drawings for the planning application showed a capacity of 9,026 in order to accommodate a pitch size that could be used for rugby matches. Officers confirmed that the 10,000 capacity came from Council policy at the time when the Council was supportive of the Football Club and was seeking the then criteria for entering the Football League. Regarding the reference to rugby, it was explained that the stadium could be used for a range of sporting events and activities consistent with the wider Council policy of supporting recreation. It was noted that a capacity of 9,026 would enable the grass pitch to be wider, however options for the ground to be smaller would be available to the Council when it was asked to make a decision.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

11. RECOMMENDATION FROM CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP - CLIMATE EMERGENCY EXE19-112

Following the Council's declaration of a 'climate emergency' at its meeting on 25 July 2019, Councillor Davis, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, introduced a report which set out recommendations from the Climate Change Working Group that were considered by the Group to be essential to monitoring progress in achieving the target of the Council's estate and operations becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and Borough-wide by 2050. Councillor Howard, Chairman of the Climate Change Working Group, commented that he had not had sight of the recommendations prior to publication and raised concern at recommendation (v) concerning zero or minimal parking provision in Woking Town Centre developments. Councillor Howard drew attention to the possible risk of excluding people who were dependent upon cars for work. The Chief Executive confirmed that the matter had been raised at the Working Group. The Working Group had discussed the conflict between the Council's approved policy and planning guidance regarding parking provision in Town Centre developments, and the behaviour at Planning Committee. It was noted that the Working Group had agreed to recommend to the Executive that the Planning Committee be asked to exercise its discretion to permit zero or minimal parking provision in Town Centre developments.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That (i) the Climate Change Working Group's recommended public definition of carbon neutrality, set out below, be adopted and published on the Council's website:

"On 25 July 2019, the Council pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030. It will reduce to zero any greenhouse emissions associated with its own estate and operations. Where any remaining emissions cannot be avoided, the Council will offset these through projects such as tree planting and maintain trade in renewable energy, thereby eliminating its contribution to climate change";

(ii) the Climate Change Working Group's recommended definition of the Council's estate and operations - comprising all Council owned assets (as set out in paragraph 3.8 of the Climate Change Working Group Report at Appendix 1) - be adopted;

(iii) the Climate Change Working Group's recommended baseline year of 2018/19 for monitoring emissions be adopted;

(iv) in the longer term, the Council will develop plans for borough-wide emissions and adaptation actions to address the climate and ecological emergency, in so far as it is able to influence activities beyond its direct control, with the aim of carbon neutrality by 2050; and

(v) the Planning Committee, having regard to the Parking Standards Supplementary Document, be requested to exercise its discretion wherever possible to permit zero or

minimal parking provision in Woking Town Centre developments.

Reason: The report outlines factors that are required to accurately measure the Council's continued progress towards carbon neutrality.

12. ASSET AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT - EXTENSION PROPOSALS EXE19-083

The Executive received a report which sought approval to extend the current Asset and Facilities Management contract with Skanska Rashleigh Weatherfoil Limited until 31 October 2021. The Executive was advised that the short extension of a year would allow the Council the opportunity to consider future arrangements for the service, such as the possibility of running the service in-house, and ensure a consistent service delivery when the Victoria Square Development opened.

RESOLVED

That in accordance with the Articles of Agreement between WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL and SKANSKA RASHLEIGH WEATHERFOIL LIMITED dated 30th October 2013 it supports an extension to the Asset and Facilities Management Contract to engage the afore-mentioned contractor for a further period of one year commencing on the First day of November 2020 and ending on the Thirty-first day of October 2021.

Reason: To maintain the delivery of Asset and Facilities Management services until the 31st October 2021.

13. CITIZENS ADVICE WOKING - BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE EXE19-012

At its meeting on 13 December 2018, the Executive agreed to withhold funding of £38,000 to Citizens Advice Woking due to concern regarding the working relationship between the Council and Citizens Advice Woking. The Leader of the Council explained that the organisation had been asked to prepare a business plan and to look at ways to improve communication. The Leader was pleased to report that the approach had been successful and thanked Lorraine Buchanan from Citizens Advice Woking and Louise Strongitharm, Head of Housing, and her team for creating a much better working relationship. It was noted that the possibility of holding meetings every three months between Citizens Advice Woking, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Head of Housing would be explored. Following a question regarding the time taken to resolve the issue, the Executive was advised that concerns had originally been raised in July 2018 but had not been addressed.

RESOLVED

That (i) the update be noted; and

(ii) the sum of £38,000 ringfenced in the Community Fund for Citizens Advice Woking towards its work during the 2019/20 financial year be released.

Reason: To further strengthen relationships between Citizens Advice Woking and Woking Borough Council.

14. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION

The Executive considered the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book) August 2019. Members discussed affordable housing. The Leader of the Council expressed disappointment that the Planning Committee had rejected 163 Thamesway properties of affordability in the Town Centre in the last twelve months due to parking concerns.

RESOLVED

That the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, August 2019, be received.

15. MONITORING REPORTS - PROJECTS EXE19-020

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.

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

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

16. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items 17 and 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 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).

17. LAND MANAGEMENT EXE19-115

RECOMMENDED to Council

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

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

18. URGENT BUSINESS - ASSET MANAGEMENT EXE19-118

RESOLVED

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

Reason: To authorise the disposal of an asset.

This document was published on Friday 11 October 2019 and the decisions within it will be implemented on Monday 21 October 2019, subject to call-in.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm
and ended at 9.35 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____