

MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**EXECUTIVE**

held on 4 February 2021

Present:

Cllr A Azad (Chairman)  
Cllr S Ashall (Vice-Chair)

Cllr K M Davis                      Cllr D Harlow  
Cllr G W Elson

Also Present: Councillors A-M Barker, J E Bond, A J Boote, M A Bridgeman, K Howard and D E Hughes.

Absent:            Councillor C S Kemp.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Leader of the Council, Councillor Azad, thanked all members of staff for the work done in regards to the Covid-19 surge testing in parts of the Borough, as well as thanking the Council's partners in the Surrey Local Resilience Forum. The Leader also thanked members of the public and residents for their co-operation in the difficult task.

**1. MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 14 January 2021 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kemp.

**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, Councillor A Azad declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

The interest of Councillor C S Kemp was referred to in the agenda but it should be noted that Councillor Kemp sent apologies to the meeting.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor D Harlow declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that speaking and voting were permissible.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Chief Executive, Ray Morgan, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mr Morgan could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Deputy Chief Executive, Douglas Spinks, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mr Spinks could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Peter Bryant, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mr Bryant could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Finance, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mrs Clarke could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Housing, Louise Strongitharm, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mrs Strongitharm could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Community Services, Julie Fisher, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The interests were such that Mrs Fisher could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Finance, Leigh Clarke, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning Woking Football Club and/or the GolDev Woking Limited development. The interest arose from (i) her husband having a small shareholding in Woking Football Club and (ii) being a Council-appointed director of Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited. The interest was such that Mrs Clarke could advise the Executive on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, Peter Bryant, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning Woking Football Club and/or the GolDev Woking Limited development. The interest arose from (i) him being a member of the Cards Trust (the supporters' club for Woking Football Club), (ii) providing occasional unpaid assistance to Woking Football Club, e.g. acting as returning officer at the election of directors and (iii) being a Council-appointed director of Kingfield Community Sports Centre Limited. The interest was such that Mr Bryant could advise the Executive on those items.

**5. QUESTIONS**

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

**6. GENERAL FUND, SERVICE PLANS, BUDGETS AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2021-22 EXE21-001**

Councillor Ashall, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Financial Planning and Policy, introduced the report outlining the proposed General Fund, Service Plans, Budgets and Prudential Indicators 2021-22. It was noted that the report had been considered by the Finance Task Group at its meeting on 28 January 2021. Councillor Ashall advised that the current environment remained uncertain and highlighted the Council's shortfall of income during the current financial year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Executive was informed that the Council faced a significant deficit despite government support, and would need to use some £9m of reserves in 2021-22 to maintain services. The Portfolio Holder stressed that the Executive would continue to do all it could to avoid cuts to Council services.

Councillor Ashall reported that the General Fund Budget proposed an increase in Council Tax of 2.04% for 2021-22 which resulted in a Band D Council Tax figure for 2021-22 of £250.46 or an increase of £5.00 per annum at Band D.

The Executive noted that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) would be updated and brought to the Executive at its meeting on 25 March 2021.

The Leader of the Council reminded Members that the deadline for submitting questions or requests to speak at Executive meetings was by noon on the working day prior to the Executive. Should such future requests from Members not be received in line with the Executive Protocol, the Leader stated that she was minded to answer late questions outside of the meeting.

The Executive welcomed the proposal in the report that the community grants approved by the Executive in December be confirmed by Council for 2021-22. The Portfolio Holder commented that the Council would need to remain vigilant concerning the situation in 2022/23.

Following a question regarding local office hubs, the Executive was advised of several buildings in the town offering such provision and it was hoped that office workers from London would be attracted to smaller local office spaces in Woking.

Regarding Victoria Square and Victoria Place referred to in the report, it was clarified that Victoria Square was the name of the development project and Victoria Place would be the name of the combined centre when complete. The Executive noted that positive communication of the Victoria Place name would be undertaken when the centre opening date had been confirmed.

Discussion ensued on the Red Town Centre car park which was currently being rebuilt as part of the Victoria Square development. It was explained that the high build cost was due to the complexity of integrating it into the development. The Chief Executive reported that the Council would receive a Victoria Square update report at its meeting on 11 February 2021 which would include the financial implications of the Council acquiring the new car park.

The Executive thanked the Finance Director and her team for their hard work in compiling the finance reports on the agenda.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- That (i) **the Revenue Estimates and Human Resource requirements for 2021/22 be approved;**
- (ii) **a Band D Council Tax for the Borough of Woking for 2021/22 of £250.46 be approved; and**
- (iii) **the Prudential Indicators at Appendix 3 to the report be approved, subject to any changes arising from consideration of the Investment Programme, revenue budgets and Final Government Settlement.**

Reason: To recommend that Council approves the resources necessary to implement its Service Plans and objectives and raises the necessary revenue through the determination of Council Tax for 2021/22.

**7. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETS 2021-22 EXE21-002**

The Executive received the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budgets 2021-22 for recommendation to Council. It was noted that, following the end of the rent reduction period in April 2020, rents would be increased by 1.5% from 5 April 2021. Attention was drawn to the impact of the Covid pandemic on HRA rent collection as well as the impact of the Sheerwater Regeneration Scheme on the HRA.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- That (i) **the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and**
- (ii) **with effect from 5 April 2021, rents be increased by 1.5%.**

Reason: To recommend that the Council approves the resources necessary to implement its objectives and to enable the Council to determine charges to tenants for 2021/22.

**8. INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2020-21 TO 2024-25 EXE21-003**

The Executive received the Investment Programme 2020-21 to 2024-25 which set out the capital and one off investments required to deliver the Council's key strategies and objectives. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ashall, stressed the high degree of uncertainty around Council finances and advised that it had been necessary to temporarily suspend projects which had not yet been committed. The Portfolio Holder made clear that the Investment Programme had not stopped and that the Council continued to progress projects across service areas. However, due to the level of uncertainty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to guarantee current projects would remain capable of being progressed in the future. The Executive noted that it was hoped that

greater certainty in the form of government support or the end of the pandemic would make it possible to re-instate projects.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- That (i) **the Investment Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25 be approved subject to reports on projects where appropriate;**
- (ii) **the proposed financing arrangements be approved;**
- (iii) **Thameswey Developments Ltd be authorised to take long term annuity funding, up to 50 years, for the Sheerwater project through its £115m facility with loans permitted to transfer to Thameswey Housing Ltd as the project progresses. The total long term loans drawn by the Thameswey Group for the Sheerwater project should not exceed the long term facility of £290m previously agreed (excluding THL revolving facility and TEL facility); and**
- (iv) **a capital grant of £300,000 and revenue grant of £150,000 for 2021/22 be approved for Brookwood Cemetery.**

Reason: To recommend to the Council that it approves the capital resources for 2020/21 onwards considered necessary to support its service plans and objectives.

**9. CAPITAL, INVESTMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES EXE21-004**

The Executive received a report which set out the Council's Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies for 2021-22 and recommended to Council that the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy be adopted. Discussion ensued on debt profile and risk, an area highlighted in the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Report. It was noted that the issue had been addressed in the report and the MRP Strategy. The Finance Director added that, as part of the final accounts process and audit of the Council's Statement of Accounts, the Council was required to risk assess every loan in order to demonstrate recoverability. Repayment of loans to Freedom Leisure and Peacocks, and changes to Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) guidance, were also discussed.

**RESOLVED**

- That (i) the Treasury Management Strategy set out in the report be approved; and

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

- That (ii) **the Capital and Investment Strategies for 2021/22 be approved; and**
- (iii) **the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators set out in table 1 of Section 4 of the Treasury Management Strategy and the MRP policy set out in Appendix A be approved, subject to any changes arising from consideration of the Investment**

**Programme, revenue budgets and Revenue Support Grant Settlement.**

Reason: To determine the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22 and to recommend to Council the Capital and Investment Strategies, Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and MRP Strategy to be adopted.

**10. HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE EXE21-009**

Following Council approval of the preferred approach of Housing Management and Asset Management Services being brought back in-house and housing repairs and maintenance works and services being procured through third party contractors from 1 April 2022 subject to tenant and leaseholder consultation, Councillor Harlow, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the report which recommended to Council approval to proceed. Councillor Harlow reported that the statutory tenant and leaseholder consultation had been undertaken during November and December and there had been strong overall support from residents. The Executive heard that, although the consultation response rate had been low, the Council had received some useful feedback from residents. Discussion ensued on the level of detail set out in the consultation letter sent to residents. The Director of Housing commented that Officers would be open to improving such letters in the future to improve accessibility.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

**That the proposal to bring Housing Management and Asset Management services back in-house and procure Housing Repairs and Maintenance works and services through third party contractors from 1 April 2022 be approved.**

Reason: To determine and agree the future delivery model for the Council's Housing and Maintenance service after the end of the current contract with New Vision Homes on 31 March 2022.

**11. TERMS OF JOINT STUDY ON THE FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS OF THE EAST OF WOKING EXE21-017**

Councillor Elson, Portfolio Holder for Planning, introduced the report in response to the resolution of Council at its meeting on 3 December 2020 which called for a joint study with other authorities and partners on the future infrastructure requirements of the east of Woking based on both current and future demand and that the terms of the study come to the Executive. Councillor Elson explained that the report set out what had already been done to assess the nature, type and scale of infrastructure to support the development identified in Byfleet and West Byfleet up to 2027 and which sought approval to the terms of what would be done to assess future requirements. The Executive was informed that the outcome of the study would be reported to the LDF Working Group, the Joint Committee and Executive.

The Executive noted that Officers would ensure that Byfleet and West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forums were consulted at key stages of the study. The Portfolio Holder asked Officers to include the residents' association, which covered Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford, and Pyrford Neighbourhood Forum in the consultation process.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the infrastructure already identified to support the proposed development in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) relating to Byfleet and West Byfleet, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted; and
- (ii) the terms of the study to identify the future infrastructure requirements to support proposed development in Byfleet and West Byfleet be agreed.

Reason: To enable the assessment of the infrastructure requirements to support proposed future development in Byfleet and West Byfleet.

## 12. PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING INFORMATION

The Executive considered the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information (Green Book) December 2020.

RESOLVED

That the Performance and Financial Monitoring Information, December 2020, be received.

Reason: To manage the performance of the Council.

## 13. MONITORING REPORTS - PROJECTS EXE21-005

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.

<p><b>This document was published on Friday, 5 February 2021 and the decisions within it will be implemented on Monday 15 February 2021, subject to call-in.</b></p>
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The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and ended at 7.57 pm.

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_