

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Executive Summary

The Council is invited to consider the recommendations from the meetings of the Executive held on 16 June 2022 and 14 July 2022 as set out in this report. The minutes of the Executive on 14 July 2022 will be published in due course. The extracts from the minutes of the meeting of the Executive on 16 June 2022 and the reports of the Executive on 14 July 2022 are set out in this report.

THE EXECUTIVE – 16 JUNE 2022

7A. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR K DAVIS - HOUSING ALLOCATIONS EXE22-041

Councillor K M Davis

“It is vitally important that our residents directly benefit from new housing development in their local area. The Council already requires a 2-year local connection for applicants joining its Housing Register for affordable homes, as well as expecting any shared ownership homes secured through the Section 106 process to be first marketed to those living or working in the Borough.

However, the Council should consider going further in promoting a “Local First” approach by:

- Investigating any further flexibilities that could be incorporated into the Housing Allocations Policy to prioritise local residents;
- Exclusively marketing any new homes built and sold by Thamesway for a set period of time to residents living in that Ward or Neighbourhood Area;
- Considering a local connection policy for any new homes delivered under the Government’s new “First Homes” tenure that prioritises residents living in that Ward or Neighbourhood Area before opening up to the Borough.”

Councillor Davis attended the meeting and spoke in support of the Motion. The Leader advised that the Executive was broadly supportive of the Motion. However the Executive did have some concerns in relation to some of the criteria suggested, such as by Ward or Neighbourhood area, as it was considered necessary to have regard to residents who had moved away from an area temporarily. The Leader proposed an amendment to the Motion to read as follows:

“It is vitally important that our residents directly benefit from new housing development in their local area. The Council already requires a 2-year local connection for applicants joining its Housing Register for affordable homes, as well as expecting any shared ownership homes secured through the Section 106 process to be first marketed to those living or working in the Borough.

However, the Council should consider going further by asking officers to develop a scheme, in which, taking into account all other considerations of housing allocations, new homes are offered first to those with local connections, for a period of 3 months. These local connections should be flexibly defined by ward, neighbourhood area, a certain distance or a natural boundary.”

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The Executive agreed the amended Motion, noting the need to take into account existing housing criteria.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion, as amended by the Executive, be supported.

7B. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR D ROBERTS - BENEFITS MANAGEMENT EXE22-042

At its meeting on 31 March 2022, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor D Roberts

“The council undertakes programmes of work to deliver benefits to the borough and controls are put in place to ensure the work is delivered on time, on budget and to scope. Whilst delivering to scope should result in the delivery of benefits, it may not always be the case. Complex projects spanning many years can require interim decisions to balance budgets, timescales, and scope because of issues arising throughout the life of the project.

This council is committed to both best practice and transparent project reporting including benefits tracking from the point at which it is considered for approval by members through to the conclusion and delivery of the project.

This council will therefore investigate how it will implement benefits management on all major projects as part of existing standard project controls such as risk and issues management.”

Councillor Roberts spoke in support of the Motion and drew attention to a suggested amendment to the wording of his Motion which recognised the Council’s current benefits management practices and which proposed improvement to the practice to ensure that any changes to benefits were reported back to Members. The Executive was invited to recommend the revised wording to the Council. The revised wording of the Motion reads as follows:

“The council undertakes programmes of work to deliver benefits to the borough and controls are put in place to ensure the work is delivered on time, on budget and to scope. Whilst delivering to scope should result in the delivery of benefits, it may not always be the case. Complex projects spanning many years can require interim decisions to balance budgets, timescales, and scope because of issues arising throughout the life of the project.

This council is committed to both best practice and transparent project reporting including benefits tracking from the point at which it is considered for approval by members through to the conclusion and delivery of the project.

This council will therefore investigate how it will improve its current benefits management practices to ensure that changes to benefits are tracked during the execution phase and reported to any council meeting in which project decisions are being made or project updates are being received by members. Also to report back, to full council, an analysis of any differences to the benefits captured at the time the project was approved against benefits realised at project closure.”

The Executive welcomed the Motion and noted the importance of benefits management. It was recognised that some projects were particularly complex, spanned many years, and had changed in scope since first agreed. Therefore the Executive was supportive of the need to track changes to project benefits. The Executive agreed to recommend the revised Motion to Council.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

7C. SUPPLEMENTARY AND AMENDED PRIORITIES - WOKING FOR ALL STRATEGY EXE22-051

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Barker, introduced the report which sought approval of the supplementary and amended priorities to the Council's Woking for all Strategy 2022-27 following the change in administration. The Leader stated that the aim of updating the Strategy was to achieve gradual change through decisive and targeted actions, taking an approach that was affordable, responsible and sustainable. It was noted that the Strategy had been refreshed to build upon the new administration's key priorities of financial responsibility, a Masterplan for the Town Centre, and taking the Council carbon neutral.

The Executive supported the supplementary and amended priorities to the Woking for all Strategy. The planned work with partners to tackle the Cost of Living crisis, including holding a Cost of Living summit in the Autumn, was particularly welcomed.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the supplementary and amended priorities for 2022-23 to the Woking for all Corporate Strategy 2022-27, as attached to the report, be adopted.

Reason: To enable the Council to clearly articulate its strategic objectives and focus of work within the Council and beyond.

7D REVIEW OF COMMUNITY GRANTS EXE22-046

Councillor Forster, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the report which recommended to Council a proposed new partnership between the Council and the Community Foundation for Surrey whereby the Community Foundation would administer community grants on behalf of the Council. Councillor Forster explained that the proposed new approach would enable community beneficiaries to apply for funding from a range of sources through one single expression of interest to the Community Foundation, creating a 'one stop shop'. It was noted that the Woking-based Community Foundation already administered the Woking Community Fund, as well as funds on behalf of Surrey County Council, Guildford Borough Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, and Spelthorne Borough Council. The administrative burden of the current grants process was raised, and it was highlighted that the new approach would allow Officer time to be used more productively by working directly with groups to advise and support.

Councillor Forster proposed an amendment to recommendation (ii) to include consultation with the Portfolio Holder. The Executive agreed the amendment to recommendation (ii).

Councillor Kemp, Shadow Portfolio Holder for Voluntary Sector, raised a number of questions regarding the proposal, including the decision making process, governance arrangements and Member oversight, and the proposed recipients of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which would provide secure funding. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council would continue to retain full control of the grants in setting the annual budget for the fund and agreeing the criteria as per the strategic priorities of the Council. It was noted that the Portfolio Holder and Senior Manager would sit on the decision-making panel and an annual report would be received by Council. Regarding SLAs, the Executive heard that it was proposed that community groups considered essential by the Council, such as the York Road Project, would

Recommendations of the Executive

be offered an SLA in order to provide financial security. Discussions would be held with regular beneficiaries regarding the new approach.

Following a question, it was explained that it was proposed to combine the Council's community grant budget to the existing Woking Community Fund.

The Executive welcomed the proposed new approach to community grants, which included the opportunity for the Council to incentivise increased investment into the endowment of the Woking Community Fund by match-funding private sector donations.

RECOMMENDED to Council

- That (i) the proposed new partnership between Woking Borough Council and the Community Foundation for Surrey be endorsed and take effect for grants in 2023/24; and**
- (ii) delegated authority to be given to the Strategic Director – Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to oversee the new partnership between Woking Borough Council and the Community Foundation for Surrey.**

Reason: To improve the process for administering community grants.

THE EXECUTIVE – 14 JULY 2022

7E. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) EXE22-043

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (xi) the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as updated be approved.**

7F. COMPANY GOVERNANCE

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) the Leader of the Council be appointed as the Council's Shareholder Representative;**
- (ii) the creation of a Shareholder Advisory Group be approved, as detailed in the report, to ensure that its companies act in the interests of the Council as shareholder and contribute to the Council's objectives;**
- (iii) the Terms of Reference of the Shareholder Advisory Group, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved;**
- (iv) Directors to the Group Companies, as outlined in Appendix 3 to the report, be appointed;**

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- (v) the Shareholder Liaison Service be established to lead on managing contractual arrangements with the companies and in holding of the companies to account;
- (vi) the establishment of Head of Shareholder Liaison Service at Grade W8 and Project Officer on Grade W5 be approved;
- (vii) delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to approve final terms and enter any Service Level Agreements where corporate functions provide support services to group companies;
- (viii) delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal and Democratic Services to approve final terms and enter any Data Protection or Information Sharing Agreement; and
- (ix) the Constitution be updated accordingly.

Reason: The recommendations proposed will improve the governance arrangements in line with current best practice and allow the Council to closely monitor its interests within each of its companies with further clarity, transparency, and reporting. It will ensure that the Council and its subsidiaries are meeting their legal and statutory responsibilities and are practising good governance.

The Council has the authority to determine the recommendations set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
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