

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Executive Summary

The Council is invited to consider the recommendations from the meetings of the Executive held on 15 June and 13 July 2023. The extracts from the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2023 are set out below.

The extracts from the minutes of the Executive on 13 July 2023 will be published in due course. Set out below are the recommendations in the reports to be considered by the Executive.

THE EXECUTIVE – 15 JUNE 2023

8a. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR E NICHOLSON - RETROSPECTIVE SURFACE WATER ACTION EXE23-046

At its meeting on 30 March 2023, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor E Nicholson

“Retrospective Surface Water Action

The latest State of the UK Climate report indicates the UK has become wetter over the last few decades, although with significant annual variation. 2011-2020 was 9% wetter than 1961-1990. From the start of the observational record in 1862, six of the ten wettest years across the UK have occurred since 1998.

The recent UK climate projections (UKCP18) provide the most up-to-date assessment of how the UK climate could change over the 21st century. Overall, the UK is expected to experience wetter winters and drier summers.

However, rain that does fall in summer will likely be more intense than what we currently experience. For example, rainfall from an event that typically occurs once every 2 years in summer is expected to increase by around 25%. This will impact on the frequency and severity of surface water flooding, particularly in urban areas.

In towns and cities, flash floods are a growing problem. Concrete can't soak up rainwater, so in heavy downpours it has nowhere to go except into drains, overloading sewers and setting off flash floods. During the recent heavy rainfall, the water caused slippages within the station underpass and led to pooling of water within areas of the town centre.

Therefore this motion proposes that this Council:

1. Engages with South West Trains to seek to secure surface water drainage systems are retrospectively fitted to the two entrances to the station underpass and /or other measures to capture rainwater are installed to reduce the excess water overspill causing slippage within the underpass.
2. That Woking planning applications continue to be assessed with surface water drainage systems in mind and that the County, as the lead flood authority is consulted on planning applications where required.

Recommendations of the Executive

3. That Woking Borough Council work proactively with the partners to green Victoria Square, and introduce features such as rainwater gardens in line with the aspirations of the town centre Masterplan.”

Councillor Nicholson spoke in support of the Motion, commenting on the need to work with partners to improve the town’s sustainability and to consider surface water drainage systems to capture and recycle rainwater. The Executive welcomed the Motion noting that it concerned working with partners to deliver, with the Council providing help and support. The Executive noted the rainwater gardens already installed in parts of the Borough and how the Council could encourage residents to use sustainable solutions, such as when installing driveways.

Councillor Nicholson drew attention to an amendment to the Motion to replace the words ‘South West Trains’ with the words ‘Network Rail and South Western Railway’. The amendment was due to South West Trains having been replaced by South Western Railway, and to reflect the parties with responsibilities for the station. The Executive was supportive of both Cllr Nicholson’s Motion and the amendment, and agreed an amended Motion to read as follows:

“Retrospective Surface Water Action

The latest [State of the UK Climate](#) report indicates the UK has become wetter over the last few decades, although with significant annual variation. 2011-2020 was 9% wetter than 1961-1990. From the start of the observational record in 1862, six of the ten wettest years across the UK have occurred since 1998.

The recent [UK climate projections \(UKCP18\)](#) provide the most up-to-date assessment of how the UK climate could change over the 21st century. Overall, the UK is expected to experience wetter winters and drier summers.

However, rain that does fall in summer will likely be more intense than what we currently experience. For example, rainfall from an event that typically occurs once every 2 years in summer is expected to increase by around 25%. This will impact on the frequency and severity of surface water flooding, particularly in urban areas.

In towns and cities, flash floods are a growing problem. Concrete can’t soak up rainwater, so in heavy downpours it has nowhere to go except into drains, overloading sewers and setting off flash floods. During the recent heavy rainfall, the water caused slippages within the station underpass and led to pooling of water within areas of the town centre.

Therefore this motion proposes that this Council:

1. Engages with Network Rail and South Western Railway to seek to secure surface water drainage systems are retrospectively fitted to the two entrances to the station underpass and /or other measures to capture rainwater are installed to reduce the excess water overspill causing slippage within the underpass.
2. That Woking planning applications continue to be assessed with surface water drainage systems in mind and that the County, as the lead flood authority is consulted on planning applications where required.
3. That Woking Borough Council work proactively with the partners to green Victoria Square, and introduce features such as rainwater gardens in line with the aspirations of the town centre Masterplan.”

RECOMMENDED to Council

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

8b. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLLR K DAVIS - DIGITAL SPINE CONNECTION EXE23-047

At its meeting on 30 March 2023, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor K Davis

“At the March Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting, Enterprise M3, the Local Enterprise Partnership discussed the Guildford to Basingstoke Digital Spine and confirmed that Woking would not have a spur to join the Gigabit link.

Connecting to the Internet via Gigabit links is a key part of the Digital Strategy as it is important for the economic output of the borough as well as the limitless opportunities high speed links provides to residents.

Would the Council please investigate opportunities that exist with a view to ensuring that the borough is connected to the fastest possible digital backbone as soon as possible and certainly within three years if it cannot be achieved within the Digital Strategy period.”

Councillor Davis was not in attendance at the meeting to present the Motion. The Executive discussed the Motion which concerned investigating opportunities to provide gigabit capable broadband to local businesses and residents. Councillor Roberts, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, advised that sufficient provision was most likely to be provided within the next three years by private sector network providers. However, the Portfolio Holder was supportive of investigating other opportunities to accelerate access to gigabit capable broadband should the Council not be achieving the proper balance of access for residents and businesses, and affordability in terms of resources available to the Council.

The Executive was supportive of the broad principle of the Motion. The Leader commented that further information could be provided ahead of Council on 20 July 2023 regarding potential future opportunities.

RECOMMENDED to Council

That the Motion be supported.

THE EXECUTIVE – 13 JULY 2023

8C. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND to Council That

- (i) the Budget Timetable be noted;
- (ii) the Guiding Principles be approved;
- (iii) the Capital Planning Principles be approved;
- (iv) it be noted that the Capital Planning Methodology will be re-designed before Budget Council on 8 February 2024;
- (v) it be noted that the Investment Programme has been suspended indefinitely on grounds of affordability;
- (vi) the savings for consultation (FFP 3(A)) including those relating to possible reductions in the Council's staffing establishment be approved;
- (vii) it be noted that the Treasury Management Strategy, Financing Strategy, and related documents will be re-set for Budget Council in February 2024;
- (viii) the MTFS and embedded MTFP as an estimate of the Council's current financial position be approved; noting that the figures will change as further updating takes place; and
- (ix) the preparation of an Assets Rationalisation Plan be noted.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: The decision is sought to ensure open and transparent governance in the financial affairs of the Council in balancing the 2024/25 Budget.

8D. SHEERWATER REGENERATION

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND to Council That

- (i) the existing Development Agreement between the Council and ThamesWey for the delivery of the Sheerwater regeneration project be brought to an end;
- (ii) ThamesWey do not commence any new phases following those currently under construction;
- (iii) ThamesWey be authorised to take such actions, including seeking technical and planning approvals as necessary, to bring its

Recommendations of the Executive

involvement in the project to a cost-effective end in consultation with the Council;

- (iv) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to give an Executive Undertaking if the Planning Committee approves the changes to the affordable housing as outlined in the report;
- (v) negotiations between the Council and ThamesWey commence on an unwinding of the previously agreed barter arrangement; and
- (vi) the Special Lettings Policy adopted in 2017 be temporarily suspended until such as time as the wider scheme and Sheerwater Community Charter have been reviewed.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To enable further work to progress that will deliver a sustainable delivery option for the Sheerwater Regeneration project whilst reducing financial risks and exposure to the Council.

8E. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) RECOVERY PLAN

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND to Council That

- (i) the update on the Housing Revenue Account budgets be noted;
- (ii) the Housing Annual Maintenance Plan (AMP) budget for 2023-24, included in the Housing Investment Programme, be increased to £5,330,000 to allow essential and statutory remedial works to be completed, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (iii) the Strategic Director – Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, be authorised to agree the disposal of vacant housing assets as required; and
- (iv) any capital receipts from disposals of vacant housing assets be held in the Major Repairs Reserve for investment in the maintenance of the Council's homes.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To ensure the Council is able set a sustainable Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and deliver on its statutory and regulatory housing duties.

8F. PUBLIC REALM USAGE POLICY

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

Recommendations of the Executive

the updated Public Realm Usage Policy, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To ensure fair and consistent usage of the town centre to promote footfall and economic prosperity.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

Reporting Person: Julie Fisher, Chief Executive
Email: julie.fisher@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3333

Contact Person: Frank Jeffrey, Head of Democratic Services
Email: frank.jeffrey@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3012

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ann-Marie Barker
Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk

Date Published: 12 July 2023

REPORT ENDS