

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 8 SEPTEMBER 2020

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 20 OCTOBER 2020

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the Meeting)

Present

Cllr John Ward (Chairman)	Cllr Mark Merryweather
Cllr Paul Follows (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Nick Palmer
Cllr David Beaman	Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman
Cllr Peter Clark	Cllr Liz Townsend
Cllr Andy MacLeod	Cllr Steve Williams

Also Present

Councillor Julia Potts, Councillor Christine Baker, Councillor Carole Cockburn, Councillor Maxine Gale, Councillor Jerry Hyman, Councillor Robert Knowles, Councillor Stephen Mulliner, Councillor John Robini and Councillor Richard Seaborne

EXE 24/20 MINUTES (Agenda item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 July 2020 were confirmed.

EXE 25/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

The following declarations were made in respect of items on the agenda:

Item 10. Service Level Agreements 2020-2021 – variations in 2nd tranche funding

Cllr David Beaman (non-pecuniary) as Waverley representative on Waverley HOPPA, Cranleigh Arts Centre, and Farnham Maltings; and Farnham Town Council representative on Brightwells Gostrey Centre.

Cllr Paul Follows (non-pecuniary) as Waverley representative on Citizens Advice Waverley.

Cllr Steve Williams (non-pecuniary) as his wife is a volunteer for Citizens Advice Waverley.

Item 12. Leisure Centre Investment updates

Cllr Steve Williams (non-pecuniary) as a member of Godalming Leisure Centre

EXE 26/20 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public.

EXE 27/20 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions from Members.

EXE 28/20 LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES (Agenda item 6)

The Leader and Portfolio Holders gave brief updates on current issues not reported elsewhere on the agenda:

- The Leader was aware of the general dissatisfaction with the lane barriers in the town centre of Farnham, and he agreed that something needed to be done. He had communicated this to the Leader of Surrey County Council (SCC) and the officers on the SCC Project Board, and to Jeremy Hunt MP.
- The SCC Planning & Regulatory Committee would be meeting later in the autumn to reconsider the UKOG drilling planning application; Waverley had reiterated its objections to the application.
- The online survey on the Climate Emergency was still open and residents and Members were encouraged to take part.
- The Safer Waverley Partnership Task Group had met, and there would be communication shortly about a recent court case concerning Anti-Social Behaviour in Farncombe.
- The draft Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) would be progressing through the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee with the view to a decision being made by Council on publishing the draft LPP2 for the Regulation 19 pre-submission consultation.
- There were two government consultations on changes to the planning system in progress: one was on changes to the current planning system and ended on 1 October; the other was on the *Planning for the Future* White Paper, and closed on 29 October. Waverley would be responding to both.
- The deadline for applications for the first round of CIL bids ended on 18 September. There had been some requests for the deadline to be extended and this was being considered.
- The Business Task Group had met on 26 August, chaired by Cllr Follows, including a presentation from Arup who had evaluated the impact of Covid on the county. There was also a representative from the EM3 LEP who gave a presentation on skills recovery.
- The Facilities Team was reducing the number of workstations at The Burys in line with the expected number of staff expected to return to the offices to work, and providing more breakout areas for meetings. There were currently around 70 staff per day working in the offices, with the remainder continuing to work from home.
- Savings in the Business Transformation Programme were on track to deliver £150k of savings by April 2021.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

There were no matters falling within this category.

PART II - MATTERS OF REPORT

The background papers relating to the following items are as set out in the reports included in the original agenda papers.

EXE 29/20 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN SURREY (Agenda item 7)

- 29.1 The Leader referred to the comprehensive report in the agenda, but noted that the matter was progressing rapidly and there were a number of updates to report:
- That afternoon, Simon Clarke, Minister for Local Government, had resigned and been replaced by Luke Hall.
 - There was ‘informed speculation’ about there being a number of waves of unitarisation, and Surrey being in the first tranche.
 - The Devolution White Paper had been delayed to October. Surrey County Council had moved their Extraordinary Council meeting from 29 September to 13 October, and there would be a Surrey County Councillors’ briefing on 29 September.
 - Surrey Borough and District Leaders had confirmed the appointment of KPMG who were developing an alternative proposal for local government in Surrey.
 - Surrey County Council had commissioned a MORI telephone poll to generate evidence to inform their case for a single Surrey unitary.
 - The Chairman of the Local Resilience Forum had written to the Leaders of the Districts and Boroughs to commend their response to the Covid pandemic crisis, which had been heartening to receive and greatly appreciated.
 - There was a petition on the Surrey County Council website from RASSU – Residents Against a Single Surrey Unitary – against a single Surrey unitary, which a number of political groups had endorsed.
- 29.2 Turning to the report, this clarified the distinction between Unitary Authorities and Combined Authorities; the government’s current criteria for unitary proposals including a strong level of local support; and the need for an increased budget to support the work being undertaken by KPMG to develop an alternative proposal for local government in Surrey. The Council resolution of 22 July had asked the Leadership to write to neighbouring councils outside of Surrey to explore interest in cross county boundary unitary councils. The report provided feedback from neighbouring councils and civil servants, which clearly indicated that this would not be a viable option to pursue.
- 29.3 Cllr Robert Knowles commended the very thorough agenda report. It was revealing that neighbours in Hampshire and Sussex were not keen to explore unitary authorities, and only Surrey was rushing ahead to grab power. The Daily Telegraph had reported earlier in the week that the government wanted elected mayors for rural areas, and had grave concerns about the expense of such an approach and the cost to council tax payers. He had no faith in the outcome of the Surrey County Council survey, and he urged that the work of KPMG consider all options, including no change.

- 29.4 Cllr Jerry Hyman noted the rumours and reports circulating, the delay in the White Paper, and the rumours of five councils being in the first wave of unitary councils, including Surrey. He hoped that KPMG were able to learn from the experience of other councils who had already begun their journey toward unitary councils. It was also important to remember that this might never happen; it was not a sensible time to be re-organising local government, and it was important not to be wasting money.
- 29.5 Cllr Follows agreed that he expected the poll questions to be highly leading to generate the evidence that Surrey wanted. All the Districts and Boroughs were contributing equally to fund the KPMG work. None of them wanted to have to do this, and they had been forced to do so entirely because of the approach of Surrey County Council. He fully expected that the clear lack of support would cause the government to pause, and the Surrey bid to falter.
- 29.6 On the recommendation of the Leader, the Executive RESOLVED to:
1. Note the progress in exploring local government opportunities in Surrey, and
 2. Allocate a budget of a further £20,000 to support preparatory work for a unitary council proposal taking the total to £30,000.

EXE 30/20 FINANCE MONITORING 2020/21 (Agenda item 8)

- 30.1 Cllr Mark Merryweather, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial Services, presented the Finance Monitoring report which detailed the budgetary carry forwards from 2019/20 that had been approved by the S151 Officer under delegated authority, and updates on the 2020/21 contingency budget. Further draft guidelines on the Sales, Fees and Charges income support scheme had been received and work had begun on preparing the first claim for the period to September. Waverley would be contacting the Towns and Parishes to discuss what Waverley could pass on in relation to their Covid costs.
- 30.2 Whilst there was still a great deal of uncertainty about the future, for the time being the assumptions within the Contingency Budget were holding up.
- 30.3 The Executive RESOLVED to note the detail contained within the report in relation to 2019/20 budget carry forwards.

EXE 31/20 CLIMATE CHANGE FUND - BUDGET ALLOCATION (Agenda item 9)

- 31.1 Cllr Steve Williams, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability, who presented the report proposing high-level budget allocations for the £200k Climate Change Fund. He thanked Council for preserving this fund in the Contingency Budget, and whilst it was not the total expenditure on actions to achieve zero carbon, it was an important source of funding for pump-priming projects.
- 31.2 Cllrs Mulliner, Seaborne, Cockburn and Hyman spoke and noted:
- Contrary to paragraph 5.2, the proposed funding plan had not been discussed with the Climate Change Advisory Group; and the Budget

Assessment Criteria matrix appeared to have been labelled the wrong way around;

- Some of the funds would be well spent on providing additional support to help the existing officers to deliver a properly assessed and costed Climate Emergency Action Plan to the Executive in December. This was a huge task and it was unrealistic to expect the two officers currently working on this to deliver without additional help. The next iteration of the Action Plan needed to have a higher degree of focus, clarity, costing and realism than the draft version most recently published.
- The 2016 baseline of emissions from the Council's own business showed that 74% came from Council-owned housing. Through a structured programme of housing modifications, this had been lowered by 3000 tonnes of carbon per year, or a 20% reduction since 2016. That programme would continue to drive down emissions, but at some point further progress would require expensive interventions on heating and insulation to drive down emissions. There was nothing in the budget proposals to address the council's own housing stock, or carry out a comprehensive housing stock condition survey for Waverley which was a fundamental requirement to inform Waverley's leadership role in reducing carbon emissions. The Housing O&S Committee had endorsed this work stream and it was disappointing that this important piece of work had not been provided for in the budget.
- Surrey County Council had responsibilities to promote active transport measures as part of their responsibilities to address air quality issues, and it was important that they were held accountable to meet their responsibilities.

31.3 In response, Executive Members thanked Members for their comments and advised that: the stock condition survey of Waverley owned housing would need to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account rather than the General Fund, and a separate budget request would be required for the wider housing stock condition survey as this was such a major piece of work.

31.4 In concluding, Cllr Williams reminded Members that the consultation on the draft Action Plan was still live, and the closing date had been extended to allow time for people to respond. He noted that there had been criticisms that the Action Plan was needed to be both ambitious and realistic, which was a difficult balance to achieve. It would not be possible to fund every action from Waverley's own resources but it was important to identify the necessary actions to achieve a zero carbon Waverley by 2030.

31.5 The Executive RESOLVED to approve the budget headings identified in Annexe 1 of the report, to be funded from the climate change earmarked reserve.

EXE 32/20 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS, 2020-2021 - VARIATION IN FUNDING TO SOME PARTNER ORGANISATIONS (Agenda item 10)

32.1 Cllr David Beaman, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Culture, introduced the report proposing a variation to the funding of some of the twelve voluntary sector organisations funded under Service Level

Agreements (SLAs) with Waverley for the second half of 2020/21, which was the third and final year of the current SLA.

- 32.2 Before the Covid pandemic, the Council's financial position had been under severe pressure, but funding for voluntary organisations had been maintained, particularly for those who provided essential services for elderly and vulnerable in the borough. As the Covid pandemic emerged, these organisations adapted their services to support their clients, the huge increase in the number of community meals provided by the day centres being just one example. On behalf of Waverley Borough Council, Cllr Beaman thanked all those involved, and particularly the volunteers, for their work to support those in need.
- 32.3 All the SLA funded organisations had received their first tranche of funding in April at the start of the financial year. Waverley officers had formally advised and discussed with all organisations that there could be implications for the second tranche of funding due 1 October depending on the impact on services, and what services had continued to be delivered. Some organisations had closed and furloughed staff; some had changed their services and incurred additional costs in doing so; many had received small business grants from the government. The recommended funding for the second half of the year was being maintained overall, but there was a redistribution of the funds proposed to reflect the way in which organisations had responded to the Covid pandemic to deliver services to vulnerable and elderly residents in the borough.
- 32.4 Cllr John Robini thanked all the volunteers for their hard work in maintaining services and community meals for the most vulnerable. Waverley had been supporting voluntary organisations through SLAs for many years, and he was clear that these needed looking at for the future to ensure that they were fair and rewarded those who helped themselves and guided others to be more proactive in fundraising and other endeavours. He supported the recommendations of the Executive, and looked forward to resuming the Overview & Scrutiny review which was looking for a sustainable approach.
- 32.5 Cllr Maxine Gale and Cllr Christine Baker both spoke in support of The Clockhouse at Milford, who felt that the recommended changes to funding could be seen as punitive and discouraging to the volunteers. They felt that there could have been more communication with The Clockhouse, and with Ward Members; and more prior notice of the recommendations. They asked that the recommendation in relation to The Clockhouse be deferred in order to allow more time for discussion with the organisation.
- 32.6 Cllr Julia Potts thanked the Leader and Portfolio Holder for their time in explaining the background to the report. On behalf of the Conservative Group Cllr Potts acknowledged the hard work of all voluntary organisations across the borough in such difficult times; many had gone above and beyond expectations, and some, through no fault of their own, had been more restricted. The Conservative Group supported in principle the recommendations set out in the report; but there were concerns about one organisation and Cllr Potts asked that the council continued to work closely with them, and not to close the door on them. Cllr Jerry Hyman recognised

that this was a complex situation and with a fixed amount of money available there would be winners and losers, and he felt that some scrutiny by Overview & Scrutiny would have been helpful.

- 32.7 In response to Members' comments, Cllr Paul Follows reflected on the issues raised by Cllrs Gale and Baker about one organisation in particular. He also believed that local government should have enough money to be able to run these services outright. But this wasn't possible and there were constraints on what the council could provide, based on a limited amount of money and recognising that some organisations had incurred costs where others had not. He stressed that the council relationship with SLA organisations was not just financial, and funding decisions were made with some knowledge of the potential consequences. Having seen the accounts of the organisation concerned, he did not believe that financially there would be a significant impact and the consequences could be contained.
- 32.8 Cllr Follows had noted the comments about relationships and communication with Ward councillors and Waverley representatives on organisations, and this would be addressed going forward, with information being shared transparently and Members trusted to keep confidences where necessary. It was also clearly necessary for relationships to be re-built between the organisation concerned, officers, Portfolio Holder, Ward members and Waverley representative, and he would be part of that process. Finally, Cllr Follows emphasised that the recommendations were in relation to funding for the second half of 2020/21, and there would be a full and proper SLA review which would be done with full participation of Ward Members and Waverley representatives.
- 32.9 The Leader apologised to the Milford ward councillors for the failure to keep them informed, and assured Members that going forward Ward Members would be included in discussions on all matters happening in their Wards.
- 32.10 The Executive RESOLVED to note the impact of COVID-19 on the SLA-funded organisations and to approve the proposed changes in funding for the final half of this year, 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021, as set out in the Exempt Annexe.

EXE 33/20 OCKFORD RIDGE, GODALMING SITE B - VIREMENT REQUEST (Agenda item 11)

- 33.1 Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman, Portfolio Holder for Housing, referred to the agenda report that provided an update on the Ockford Ridge council housing regeneration programme. Site D had been completed, and Site A would complete in the next 3 months. In order to progress Site B, a budget virement was needed from the surplus capital budget for Site A, which would enable the appointment of demolition and build contractors.
- 33.2 Cllr Julia Potts was pleased to endorse the recommendation and she was delighted to see that the Ockford Ridge regeneration project begun by the previous Conservative administration was continuing to deliver new homes.

- 33.3 The Executive RESOLVED to approve the virement of £559,468 from the approved capital budget for Ockford Ridge Site A to the project to deliver Site B.

EXE 34/20 LEISURE CENTRE INVESTMENTS UPDATE (Agenda item 12)

- 34.1 Cllr Liz Townsend, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Parks and Countryside, gave an update on the leisure centre investment programme, and began by updating Members on the re-opening of the leisure centres following the relaxation of lockdown measures. The Leisure Centre operators had received no targeted financial support from the government despite having a lengthy and enforced period of closure. Since re-opening on 17 August, around 50% of customers had returned and the measures taken by Place Leisure to provide a safe environment for staff and customers had been very positively received. Usage would be closely monitored over the coming weeks and months, and it was very positive that swimming lessons had now resumed.
- 34.2 The Leisure Centre investment programme had been agreed in July 2018 subject to increases in the management fee payable by Places Leisure. The impact of the Covid closure was that Places Leisure could not commit to an increase in the management fee and therefore the expected return on investment to the Council could not be achieved. The investment programmes would be deferred and the capital and S106 sums would remain in reserves. This would allow time to assess the impact of Covid on the leisure centres and would lead into the preparations for the contract re-tender beginning autumn 2021.
- 34.3 It was intended to continue to secure Secretary of State approval to dispose of the area of land at Broadwater School, which would enable development at Godalming Leisure Centre in future. And, the project to provide a new leisure centre for Cranleigh would also continue, under the auspices of the Recovery, Change and Transformation Project.
- 34.4 Cllr Julia Potts expressed her disappointment that the leisure centre investment programme had been suspended, although it was understood why this was necessary. She was pleased to see, however, that there was still a commitment to provide new facilities for Cranleigh.
- 34.5 The Executive RESOLVED to:
1. Note that the investment in improvements in the facilities at Godalming and Farnham Leisure Centres is not being progressed;
 2. Agree that Officers progress with obtaining the Secretary of State's approval, in partnership with Surrey County Council, for the disposal of an area of land at Broadwater School in Godalming to enable the development at Godalming Leisure Centre to recommence in the future; and,
 3. Agree that the multi-million pound leisure investment project in Cranleigh continues at present but will be part of the Recovery Change & Transformation review of all corporate projects.

EXE 35/20 ADOPTING A CONSISTENT APPROACH ON EVENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (Agenda item 13)

- 35.1 Cllr Nick Palmer, Portfolio Holder for Operational and Enforcement Services, presented the report that set out a proposed approach for dealing with events in Waverley during the Covid-19 pandemic in order to minimise the risks of spread of infection and outbreaks in the borough. The aim was to achieve a balance between Covid-appropriate precautions and allowing activities to continue based on government guidelines. The approach would be kept under review in the light of circumstances and experience.
- 35.2 Cllrs John Robini and Paul Follows noted the impact on activities promoted by the Town Councils, with some events having been cancelled. The government was encouraging the re-opening of the high streets and town events helped to attract visitors; but 'track and trace' was very difficult for open-air events, and in the run-up to Christmas it would be a real challenge to develop a viable model for running events like the Haslemere Christmas Fayre.
- 35.3 The Executive RESOLVED that the Council would adopt the following approach with respect to events in Waverley during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- a. That gatherings of up to 30 people be permitted in accordance with the current Government guidelines.
 - b. That gatherings of more than 30 people are only permitted if they;
 - i. are in line with the requirements of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2020, which include a risk assessment demonstrating that the organiser has taken all reasonable measures to limit the risk of transmission of the coronavirus and following sector specific guidance;
 - ii have satisfactory arrangements for complying with track and trace requirements; and,
 - iii have satisfactorily complied with and signed off the Surrey checklist (see attached checklist version 4 developed by SCC Public Health), which is under regular review.
 - c. That where an event proposal is not considered to meet the requirements of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2020, it will be referred to Surrey County Council's Director of Public Health to consider whether the event would pose serious and imminent threat to health relating to coronavirus transmission.
 - d. That in view of the likely difficulties in implementing infection mitigation and prevention measures at certain types of event that these would not generally be supported whilst the current restrictions are in place and the Covid-19 pandemic exists. Such events include bonfires, firework displays and beer festivals.
 - e. That because of the rapidly changing backdrop to the pandemic and frequent changes to the legislation and guidance relating to it, the Head of Environmental and Regulatory Services be given delegated authority to amend the approach to events after consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and relevant Portfolio Holders.

- 36.1 Cllr Mark Merryweather introduced the report which proposed the leasehold transfer of Elstead Village Green to Elstead Parish Council. On 8 October 2019, the Executive had given approval of transfer of green space assets to a number of Town and Parish Councils. Elstead Parish Council had subsequently asked to take a lease of the Village Green on the same terms. The new lease would enable the Parish Council to have full control over the local village green, and remove Waverley Borough Council from the responsibility and cost for grounds maintenance of that key site.
- 36.2 The Executive RESOLVED that:
1. The leasehold transfer to Elstead Parish Council of Elstead Village Green is approved; and
 2. Delegated authority is given to officers to finalise the heads of terms and complete the necessary legal document(s) with the Parish Council with detailed terms and conditions to be agreed by the Strategic Director, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.15 pm

Chairman