

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 7 SEPTEMBER 2021

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 19 OCTOBER 2021

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

**Present**

Cllr Paul Follows (Chairman)	Cllr Kika Mirylees
Cllr Peter Clark (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Nick Palmer
Cllr Andy MacLeod	Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman
Cllr Penny Marriott	Cllr Liz Townsend
Cllr Mark Merryweather	Cllr Steve Williams

**Apologies**

None received

**Also Present**

Councillor David Beaman, Councillor Jerry Hyman, Councillor Stephen Mulliner and Councillor Richard Seaborne

EXE 14/21 MINUTES (Agenda item 2)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 June 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

EXE 15/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest raised under this heading.

EXE 16/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

The Executive received the following questions in accordance with Procedure Rule 10:

(i) From Lucie Beckett

“In a recent meeting Head of Planning at WBC outlined the numbers of permissions, completions and commencements. In total, 5,350 dwellings have been permitted over the plan period. Of these, 2,400 have commenced and 2,950 permissions have not commenced. Please can the Portfolio Holder for Planning kindly provide a breakdown of all of the 2,950 dwellings which have not commenced?”

**Response from Councillor Andy MacLeod, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy**

Thank you for your question. The Council can confirm the following number of dwellings have planning permission but have not yet commenced:

- In Cranleigh the figure is 58
- For Haslemere the figure is 111
- In Godalming the figure is 238
- In Farnham the figure is 198
- For the other settlements in the Borough the figure is 2,349

The Council would be happy to provide a list of planning permissions that make up the 2,950 dwellings that have yet to commence referred to in your request. I will arrange for the necessary information to be sent to you. We would draw your attention to the fact that the Council hopes to publish the Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement for 2021 soon which will provide the most up to date figures regarding the number of outstanding planning permissions.

(ii) From Kathy Smyth

"I am pleased to see the Council review its own housing design standards and I appreciate all the work that has been done by the cross party working group towards this. Many of the recommendations are very welcome, particularly the one that "new homes shall be built with alternative heat sources to gas boilers" as this is certainly not happening yet with private sector housing.

While the following question may appear to be emerging very late in the day, the last minutes of a group called the Housing Design Tasks and Standards Group were published in January 2020. The working party which produced this report does not appear to have published minutes so really there has been no opportunity for previous comment by members of the public.

As the policy relates to its own housing stock, I am conscious that this policy affects relatively few new houses built in Waverley but I think the issue is one of principle and that it is extremely important for the Council to set the highest sustainability standards in relation to the quality of its own new housing stock.

So my question is,

Recommendation 12 of the Housing Design Standards Working group states that

"The Council should build homes such that renewable energy can be generated on-site whenever feasible."

This appears unambitious for a Council which has declared a climate emergency. It seems to be implicitly approving and adopting the "business as usual approach" by supporting the design of a housing estate and then seeing what renewables can be supported.

The alternative and preferred approach would be to review the site and design the estate from the start to maximise renewable energy. So for instance, the layout should be designed to maximise the use of heat pumps, and the road layout should facilitate south facing roofs and the design of the roofs should not be broken up by numerous dormers and gables as is so often the case.

Would the Executive therefore be prepared to modify the recommendation and adopt something more along the following lines:-

"The Council should design developments and build homes such that on-site renewable energy generation can be maximised"

## **Response from Councillor Anne-Marie Rosoman, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety**

As there are other factors which we will need to consider in designing a scheme for example, making best use of the council's land asset, site constraints, planning requirements and best value financial consideration too.

What we will do is use renewable energy solutions, considered in conjunction with for example fabric (floor & wall insulation/windows/materials). Therefore recommendation 12 should be amended to;

*"The Council should design and build homes such that renewable energy can be generated on-site to achieve the best results in terms of the standards set out in Recommendation 8 given the range of technologies and fabric measures available."*

### **EXE 17/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 5)**

Councillor David Beaman asked the following question:

"Are either officers and/or members of the Waverley Executive been involved in formal or informal discussions over or even aware of the details of any bid by Surrey County Council to Central Government to participate in a pilot County Council devolution deal to which reference is made by Cllr Nick Darby of the opposition Residents' Association and Independent Group of SCC Councillors in an open letter to SCC Leader Tim Oliver published in the Farnham Herald on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> August? If not what action is being taken to ensure that the interests of Waverley Borough Council and its residents can take full advantage of any apparent devolution of any powers and responsibilities from SCC?"

The Leader responded as follows:

Along with Afghanistan, this has been one of the things that has taken up quite a lot of my time over the course of the last four weeks. As one of the Surrey borough leaders I am part of the Surrey Leaders Group which is the 11 district and borough leaders of Surrey plus the Leader of Surrey County Council. As you will be aware we were all informed, all the Surrey district and borough leaders, quite late in the day that Surrey was going to put in such a bid.

The concern we have is that what is being asked for by Surrey County Council is pretty unclear, they just want to be considered for whatever is on offer. Equally we are not entirely sure what is on offer from the Government for Surrey to be bidding for. It seems to be some sort of combined authority powers as distinct from unitary authority powers. I know the group that I represent at Surrey County Council, the Liberal Democrat group, but also the independent residents group at Surrey County Council, are all of the opinion that we need to keep our options open and see what Surrey are offered rather than dismiss anything out of hand at this level; and we are waiting to see what the Government response to that would be. That being said, if Surrey County Council do try and move forward and enforce some variety of unitary on the people of Waverley or the people of Surrey more generally, the Surrey Leaders Group have not ruled out taking further action to address that.

So at the moment we are still waiting for some of the detail, but there might be theoretically some powers that Surrey get that might be useful to the districts and boroughs. My only caveat would be that there are plenty of powers that they have at present that would be useful to districts and boroughs and they have not devolved any of those to us and I see no reason why an administration so keen on centralisation would actually do that if they were given further powers. So at the moment we are keeping our options open, but it is pretty clear the track that Surrey County Council are on.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Beaman read an extract from a letter from the Chief Executive of Surrey County Council in respect of the bid, regarding Surrey working with its districts and boroughs. The Leader echoed Councillor Beaman's comments regarding working together.

### **PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

There were no matters falling within this category.

### **PART II - MATTERS OF REPORT**

#### **EXE 18/21 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 advised that Waverley had pledged to support between 5-10 Afghan families seeking refuge in the UK, subject to the identification of appropriate properties and detail from the Government on funding.
- Councillor Clark provided an update on the new layout and working practices in the Council offices, including hot desking for staff and Councillors and breakout areas and meeting rooms for teams and committees. A key focus had been to reduce the overall footprint of the building, releasing space for potential leasing. Future joint working with Guildford Borough Council could involve shared office space and the changes would have a positive impact on any future arrangement.
- Councillor Merryweather referred to the Council news release from 2<sup>nd</sup> September confirming that the Council had submitted a bid to acquire the Dunsfold Park site, which had been unsuccessful. Further detail was expected soon and updates would be given when that information was received.
- Councillor MacLeod advised that a change would be proposed to the draft Local Plan Part 2, to replace the Redcourt site with the Royal School in Hindhead and carry out a six week Regulation 19 consultation. The new timetable would still achieve a submission to the Secretary of State by the end of the year. The Redcourt developer had submitted an appeal, which would also be heard in December. A grand opening for Brightwells was planned for the Spring 2022 and the developers were still securing tenants for the retail units. A meeting of the Brightwells board would take place in early October at which point an update would be received on progress with the lettings.

- Councillor Marriott provided an update on the work being carried out to collect, monitor and scrutinise data on the Council's performance in the area of equalities, diversity and inclusion. Pride in Godalming would be taking place at the end of September and attendance was encouraged.
- Councillor Mirylees advised that the proposed funding mechanism, the Thriving Communities Commission, would be considered by Overview and Scrutiny in September with applications opening in October.
- Councillor Rosoman updated on the urgent situation with the Afghan refugees. She urged colleagues to lobby the Government to drive the work forward with proper funding.
- Councillor Townsend advised that a week of sport would be taking place in September, including events and discounts paid for with Government grant funding and encouraged colleagues to promote in their areas. A webinar would be held for local businesses on 5G at the end of September. There would be a stall at Pride in Godalming to promote Waverley as a great place to live and work. Feedback was being collated from the No Mow May initiative, which would inform the new grass cutting and biodiversity project. The Leisure team had been running a number of summer projects across the Borough and a feasibility study was being carried out on Cranleigh Leisure Centre. Godalming Park Run was due to run on 18<sup>th</sup> September.
- Councillor Williams advised that as part of the Council's commitment to climate change, it would be supporting World Car Free Day on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. This would be a challenge in a rural borough with sometimes poor public transport, however the Council was keen to encourage staff and residents to do what they can on that date. It would also be an opportunity to identify what the challenges would be going forward with moving to more sustainable forms of transport and there would be further reports on strategies to tackle these challenges in the future.
- The Leader concluded by thanking the officers and Councillors for their work over the summer.

EXE 19/21 REPORT BACK FROM VFM O&S ON CALL-IN (PROPERTY MATTER) (Agenda item 7)

Councillor Merryweather introduced the item which was a report back to the Executive on a call-in of a property matter considered by the Executive at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, which he confirmed related to Dunsfold Park. The decision taken related to the funding for independent expert advice necessary to carry out due diligence on a conditional bid. Securing such advice was set out in the Council's investment policies and the funding sought from earmarked reserves for this purpose. The call-in discussion had been constructive, however had covered too broad a range of topics and much of the discussion had been redundant in light of the Council decision taken the week before the call-in meeting. The Executive reminded the Committee that the decision did not bind the Council for any future decisions on the matter and that a range of consultation had taken place, both formal and informal, with all Councillors, including members of the Property Investment Advisory Board and the Chairman of the Audit Committee being invited to take part in the discussion at the Executive.

Councillor Mulliner spoke on the item, expressing concern over the rushed timetable which hindered the ability for councillors to interact with the process. He

encouraged the Executive to consider more informal discussion meetings with councillors in any future decisions of this significance to build consensus and engage in active discussion. He was of the view that the matter of risk had not been considered in enough detail and there had not been the opportunity for councillors to question the risks.

The Leader added that there had not been a formal process to engage with until quite near the deadline for submitting a bid and therefore there was no information which could have been brought to council for consideration. The decision was to carry out the due diligence and those outcomes would have been reported to Council. Information was brought to councillors at the earliest opportunity and the discussion at the Executive had been opened up to all councillors.

Councillor Merryweather echoed the Leader's comments and Councillor Rosoman expressed concern that some of the information from the confidential report had been released and that all councillors should consider this carefully in future.

The Executive noted the outcome of the call-in meeting.

EXE 20/21 REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON HOUSING DESIGN STANDARDS  
(Agenda item 8)

Councillor Rosoman introduced the report and thanked the members of the working group for their work and tenants panel for taking part in the survey. The recommendations have been reviewed in light of legislative changes and to incorporate energy efficiency and sustainability into housing design to contribute to the Council's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and achieve value for money. The Executive were asked to consider the recommendations, with the amendment to recommendation 12 as set out in the response to the public question earlier in the meeting.

Councillors Seaborne spoke on the item as Chairman of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a member of the working group and welcomed the report and gave an overview of the recommendations, with the rationale behind them.

Councillor Hyman spoke on the report, congratulating the working group for their work and sought clarification on the objective of reducing energy bills and the formatting of the recommendations.

The Leader reminded those present that as the Council was not a utility company, it had no control over the cost of energy, however it was the hope that energy bills would be reduced by the measures proposed. Councillor Merryweather spoke on the item, highlighting the need to progress to ensure that costs would come down.

Councillor Rosoman concluded by thanking the officers involved and proposing an amendment to recommendation 12, as per her previous comment.

**RESOLVED that**

**That the report included as Annexe 1 be agreed and its recommendations be adopted with one amendment to recommendation 12:**

**That the Working Group's recommendations as amended below be endorsed:**

- 1. Retain the standards set out in Annexe 1, Appendix A**
- 2. New homes shall be built with alternative heat sources to gas boilers.**
- 3. The design standards should be mindful of facilitating parcel deliveries and reducing the strain on those making deliveries of parcels and letters.**
- 4. Set standards for the future and explicitly connect the Council's housing design standards and its asset management plan in order to avoid retrofits.**
- 5. The Council implements the SAP 10 assessment methodology as part of the assessment process to deliver net zero carbon homes.**
- 6. The Council should align its plans for future developments with the timeframes contained in the "LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide".**
- 7. The Council should work with our contractors and their supply chains through the tender process to work to achieve carbon neutrality as measured by a RICS whole life carbon assessment by 2030.**
- 8. All new properties developed by the Council should receive a SAP rating of 100 to enable them to be Energy Efficiency A-rated with an Environmental Rating 99A (CO<sub>2</sub> emission rate 0 tonnes/year) – net zero carbon in operation.**
- 9. The Council should make the budgetary provision necessary to achieve the standards outlined in this report to deliver a net zero home in operation measured using Part L 2021.**
- 10. That the Council should not pursue Passivhaus accreditation unless there is a compelling additional reason to do so, for example, if grant funding is conditional upon achieving it.**
- 11. New occupants of any mechanically ventilated properties should be provided with sufficient information and training to ensure the property performs in operation as in design.**
- 12. The Council should design and build homes such that renewable energy can be generated on-site to achieve the best results in terms of the standards set out in Recommendation 8 given the range of technologies and fabric measures available.**
- 13. The Council should build homes using modern methods of construction, for example, timber frame.**
- 14. The Council shall update the standards for new build properties in light of Building a Safer Future: Independent Review of Building**

**Regulations and Fire Safety (Final Report) [May 2018] by Dame Judith Hackitt.**

- 15. The Council should seek and apply best practice in the design of space for refuse and recycling containers.**
- 16. Addition of further in-use sound test sampling as part of the Employer's Requirements.**
- 17. All new Council properties should be built on the assumption that during their lifespan electric vehicles will entirely displace those powered by internal combustion engines. This means providing charging infrastructure on parking spaces provided on land owned or controlled by the Council. Where parking spaces are provided elsewhere, the Council should ensure the necessary conduits are installed to allow for the easy installation of charging infrastructure if the demand arises.**
- 18. Where the scale of provision on a given site makes it feasible, the development should make a contribution to improving walk- and cycle ways in the area.**
- 19. For properties with good access to public transport, the Council should assess the feasibility of planning policies that provide a degree of flexibility for the minimum number of parking spaces to include pull-in or visitor spaces for short stays by emergency and delivery vehicles in place of residents parking.**
- 20. Developers design in an arrangement for tenants without in-curtilage parking provision to be charged for electricity supplied to communal parking areas for vehicle charging points.**
- 21. That for any future Council-lead development, an assessment in light of the considerations in Building for a Healthy Life should be undertaken and published.**
- 22. The Council should work with appointed architects, contractors and Designing Out Crime Officers to improve the securing of buildings and adopt crime prevention measures across the site.**
- 23. For new builds to continue to achieve <105 litres of water per person per day.**
- 24. The Council should facilitate rainwater harvesting through the provision of water butts and for larger sites consider the larger systems such as underwater storage tanks.**
- 25. The Council should, as a matter of routine, survey tenants of new homes about their experience of living in them within six months of them moving into the property.**
- 26. The Council should explore the possibility of engaging external expertise to use qualitative research methods including depth interviews and focus groups to gain a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of new tenants.**

**27. The Council should implement a co-design process for new homes with a representative from the Tenants Panel.**

**28. Officers should produce a user-facing brochure and update the technical employer's requirements based on the recommendations of the Group. The user-facing brochure should be considered and agreed upon with the Tenants Panel.**

Reason: To ensure that the Council has current design standards for the homes it is building which reflect changes in legislation and its declaration of a climate emergency.

EXE 21/21 REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE TO PRODUCE A CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) (Agenda item 9)

At 6.47pm, the Council Chamber lost connection to the livestream. The Leader paused the meeting to enable officers to re-establish the connection which they were unable to do. The Leader resumed the meeting at 6.50pm.

Councillor Williams introduced the report, which proposed a supplementary estimate for the procurement of external consultants to prepare a climate change and sustainability supplementary planning document.

Councillors Seaborne and Hyman spoke on the report.

**RESOLVED that the supplementary estimate attached as Annexe 1 to the report for up to an additional £30,000 to go towards meeting the fees of procuring external consultants to prepare the Climate Change SPD, to be met from the General Fund Working Balance, be approved.**

Reason: £10,000 has already been agreed in principle from the climate change fund to prepare the Climate Change SPD, however the anticipated cost of producing the SPD is estimated to be between £30,000 and £40,000 which means there is a funding gap believed to be of up to £30,000 (albeit the full cost will only be known once an external procurement exercise has been undertaken. These additional funds cannot be met from within the current Local Plan budget as this is needed to fund the remaining stages of Local Plan Part 2, including a further round of public consultation and the Examination in Public. Furthermore, addressing the climate change emergency is a corporate priority that is an issue that goes across a few Council services.

EXE 22/21 ELSTEAD VILLAGE GREEN (Agenda item 10)

Councillor Merryweather introduced the item which proposed the transfer of the freehold of Elstead Village Green to Elstead Parish Council which would enable the Parish Council to have responsibility for the cost and maintenance of the site.

**RESOLVED that**

**The Freehold transfer to Elstead Parish Council of Elstead Village Green be approved;**

**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).**

Reason: This new transfer will enable Elstead Parish Council to have full control over the local village green and removes Waverley from the responsibility and cost for grounds maintenance of that key site.

**The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 6.59 pm**

**Chairman**