

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 8 MARCH 2022

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 26 APRIL 2022

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

Present

Cllr Paul Follows (Chairman)	Cllr Mark Merryweather
Cllr Peter Clark (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Nick Palmer
Cllr Andy MacLeod	Cllr Liz Townsend
Cllr Penny Marriott	Cllr Steve Williams

Apologies

Cllr Kika Mirylees and Cllr Paul Rivers

Also Present

Councillor Jerry Hyman, Councillor Stephen Mulliner and Councillor John Ward

EXE 94/21 MINUTES (Agenda item 2)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 February 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

EXE 95/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest raised under this heading.

EXE 96/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public.

EXE 97/21 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 5)

The Executive received the following question in accordance with Procedure Rule 11:

1) From Councillor John Ward

"Our Business Transformation Plan over the past 2 years has saved this Council over £1 million, so will the new collaboration with Guildford Borough Council mean that we will no longer need a Business Transformation Plan at Waverley?"

Reply from Councillor Peter Clark, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Business Transformation, IT, Customer Services & Farnham Infrastructure Programme

"We are tremendously proud of the success of the Business Transformation programme. As you say Councillor Ward, we had a target of saving £1m across all BT projects and we are on target to achieve that, so a thank you goes to David

Allum, Wendy Cooper and the rest of the BT team. Business Transformation is just one of the measures that the Council is pursuing to address the budget shortfall and protect front line services. Our Medium-Term Financial Plan, approved by Council two weeks ago, sets out the ongoing pressures on our budget including inflation, ongoing covid impact and cuts to government funding, not to mention the increased costs associated with the rise in National Insurance taking effect next month. Even after the forecast savings from the BT programme, the commercial strategy and investment in property, we still have forecast a significant budget deficit. The projected cost savings arising from the collaboration with Guildford will help close this gap, but it still leaves over £2.5m p.a. to find. So, to answer your question, yes we will need to continue with further business transformation activity alongside any anticipated savings that our collaboration with Guildford may bring. The skillsets already shown by Waverley's Business Transformation Team will stand us in good stead as we analyse whether further collaboration savings can be found. I and the rest of the Executive are excited by this challenge and as soon as the Inter-Authority Agreement is finalised and agreed by both Councils, then we can really get started."

EXE 98/21 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:

- Leader spoke on the unprovoked and illegal attack on the people of Ukraine and invasion of its territory by the Russian Federation. The Mayor would be reading a message of solidarity at the forthcoming Council meeting and the Leader wished to offer solidarity on behalf the Executive. He urged the Government to urgently review the visa status of those fleeing Ukraine and highlighted the links on the Council's website to useful resources for residents who wished to donate and offer help.
- Councillor Clark echoed the comments made by the Leader in respect of the conflict in Ukraine and updated on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme. The five members of the Farnham Board who were Farnham Councillors had been meeting with the Surrey FIP team to provide them with local feedback. The Surrey project team and their consultants had shared their proposals for improving the town centre infrastructure which would reduce traffic and attract people into the town centre. The next meeting would take place on 25 March and would be available to livestream.
- Councillor MacLeod echoed the comments made in respect of Ukraine and welcomed the response by the public. Officers were currently reviewing the planning enforcement action plan which would come to the Executive for consideration in due course and a wider review of enforcement across the whole Council was also taking place. Brightwells was still on course to open later in the year and the work on connecting Sainsbury's car park to the scheme had begun and this would take approximately three months to complete. Complaints had been received regarding noise and officers were investigating whether the developers were complying with their agreed hours of operation.
- Councillor Merryweather echoed the comments made in respect of Ukraine.
- Councillor Palmer echoed the comments made in respect of Ukraine and stressed that the Council was ready to help refugees and urged the

Government respond to the overwhelming public feeling that the UK should help.

- Councillor Penny Marriott spoke about International Women's Day in the context of the conflict of Ukraine. The Council's revised policy objectives were starting their decision making journey and would come to the Council for approval.
- Councillor Liz Townsend echoed the comments made in respect of Ukraine, offering sympathy for their plight and spoke of the importance of protecting democracy and challenging leaders who seek to erode people's freedoms. The planning team had reduced the backlog to three cases and she thanked the officers for their work. As of 1 April 2021, there were 5309 dwellings in the Borough with planning permission. Of those, 2912 were on sites where the development had not yet started. The Council was bound by the housing targets set for it by the Government and it was felt that the National Planning Policy Framework was not fit for purpose. The system imposed on the Council was tilted in the favour of developers and urged people to direct their criticism to the national policy makers rather than the administrators of the policy.
- Councillor Williams echoed the comments on Ukraine and urged the Government to overcome the barriers which would enable Waverley to welcome refugees. He updated on the recruitment for a sustainability team officer. Work was continuing to expand the network of electric vehicle charging points. Officers were working with the Council's refuse contractor on decarbonising its fleet of refuse vehicles. The Executive had met with the Director of Environment at Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council Executive on how to work together towards net zero carbon and a motion would be brought to Council in April to ask the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up to ask the Government to provide funding for the Council's trajectory to carbon neutrality.
- The Leader thanked the Executive for their contributions and welcomed students from University of Creative Arts who were filming a documentary on local government.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

There are no items under this heading.

PART II - MATTERS OF REPORT

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

EXE 99/21 FAIRGROUND CAR PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (Agenda item 7)

Councillor Merryweather presented the report which set out a proposal to progress due diligence in respect of the Fairground Car Park site in Haslemere to enable its redevelopment. He echoed the comments made by Councillor Townsend in respect of the constraints placed on the Council by the Government and welcomed the opportunity to develop Council owned land.

Councillor Mulliner echoed the comments made in respect of Ukraine and the need to protect freedoms. He spoke on the report and highlighted the low number of

dwelling proposed for this site. The density of the surrounding sites indicated that the site should have a higher density and this should be investigated to maximise the use for housing.

Councillor Hyman echoed the comments made in respect of Ukraine and the need to protect democracy. He spoke on the report and asked the Executive to instruct officers to provide bird numbers and mitigation against environmental loss.

Councillor Merryweather responded that due diligence would consider density, provision of car parking and the needs of the local residents.

The Leader welcomed the report and although some of the comments were not relevant to the consideration of the report, agreed to respond to Councillor Hyman outside the meeting.

RESOLVED that a budget of up to £50,000 be approved to be met from the Property Investment Reserve to progress due diligence, including title reports, contamination assessment and external professional assistance with tender specification and evaluation.

Reason: The Fairground Wey Hill site has been identified as an opportunity for development of a council owned asset under the Asset Investment Strategy, in support of the corporate priorities. The site is currently a free unmade car park in the centre of Haslemere and is used by local shoppers and commuters. The draft local Plan part 2 (LPP2) designates the site as brownfield, to yield at least 20 dwellings, as a mixed-use development and identifies the need to retain parking spaces where possible.

Initial consultation was done in September 2021 with a site visit attended by Ward Members, officers and supported by HLM Architects. Progression of the development plans for the site will include further consultation with Haslemere Town Council and the Haslemere Hub to ensure it is appropriately accommodated within the development plans.

An Option appraisal has been undertaken to assess the wider development potential of the site and specifically, the viability of a mixed used development scheme. This has demonstrated that a scheme is achievable, including at least the required LPP2 20 dwelling and retained car parking capacity. A Project Initiation Document (PID) for the project has been drawn up to provide a governance framework to progress the project.

The next stage of the project is to develop a tender specification incorporating the LPP2 and asset investment compliant criteria to seek bids from interested parties to acquire a long lease of the commercial, provide site development and delivery proposals (i.e. a development partner). The evaluation of the tender process will inform the optimal scheme for the site and will determine the funding strategy.

The outcome of the tender process will be brought back to Executive to agree the next steps as appropriate.

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Procedure Rule 20, and in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified at the meeting in the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 namely: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

EXE 101/21 THE PUMP HOUSE, KIMBERS LANE, FARNHAM - ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT
(Agenda item 9)

RESOLVED that the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved.

Reason: The reasons are set out in the exempt report.

EXE 102/21 BRIGHTWELLS YARD, FARNHAM - UPDATE (Agenda item 10)

RESOLVED that the recommendations as set out in the exempt report be approved.

Reason: The reasons are set out in the exempt report.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 6.45 pm

Chairman