

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2022

(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 Paul Rivers
Cllr Andy MacLeod	Cllr Liz Townsend
Cllr Penny Marriott	Cllr Steve Williams
Cllr Mark Merryweather	

Apologies

Cllr Nick Palmer

EXE 26/22 MINUTES (Agenda item 2)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 July and the Special Meeting held on 18 July 2022 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

EXE 27/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest raised under this heading.

EXE 28/22 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

There were no questions received from Members of the Public.

EXE 29/22 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 5)

There were no questions received from Members of the Council.

EXE 30/22 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 wished the new Prime Minister luck and hoped that there would be a change in the position the Government had taken previously on the cost of living and energy crisis. The Council's own Cost of Living Working Group would be meeting for the first time on 15 September, where the impacts on residents, tenants, contractors and staff would be examined. Public engagement events would be held on the Godalming Regeneration Project over the next week.
- Councillor Clark updated on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme, which had begun its public consultation. Residents would be able to comment on a

number of traffic proposals for the town centre. So far 367 responses had been received and the consultation had been extended to 2 October.

- Councillor MacLeod provided an update on Brightwells. Crest Nicholson had advised that M&S had changed their strategy and no longer wanted food stores in town centres, rather they wanted them in out of town locations with more car parking, and this was the reason for them withdrawing from the scheme. The developer was now looking for new anchor tenants, which was likely to cause some delay. The Council would continue to support the developer and Surrey County Council in delivering a successful development.
- Councillor Penny Marriott advised that an informal Councillor working group had been held to look at equalities, diversity and inclusion issues in the Council and a further meeting would be held before the end of the year. The Corporate Equalities Group had also met and considered the Equalities Action Plan.
- Councillor Merryweather advised that work on examining the impact of macro-economic pressures on the MTFP was ongoing and an update would be reported shortly. There was concern over a potential skills gap with staff looking to the private sector for a salary uplift and resulting in increase in agency spend. The Council's contractors were also experiencing their own financial pressures, which would also impact on the Council.
- Councillor Paul Rivers updated on the rebuilding of the Vernon Court wall which was due to be completed by November.
- Councillor Liz Townsend advised that the last hearing day of the LPP2 examination had been held and the report was now awaited from the Inspector and thanked the team for their work. She wished the new Prime Minister luck and hoped that there would be support for businesses facing an uncertain future in the cost of living crisis.
- Councillor Williams advised that the Air Quality Steering Group had reconvened and would meet the following week. The Carbon Neutrality Action Plan was being updated and a meeting of the Climate Emergency Board would be meeting on 5 October.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

There were 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 31/22 AFFORDABLE HOMES SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT UPDATE - TO APPROVE DOCUMENT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION (Agenda item 7)

Councillor Liz Townsend presented the report which set out the draft Affordable Homes Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation, and noted a slight change to the dates for the public consultation. Once adopted the SPD would become a material planning consideration and represented a commitment by the Council to lowering social rents by introducing a Waverley rent cap. The SPD also responded to the Government's First Homes Scheme. The Leader echoed the

frustration felt by many in local government at the Government's definition of "affordable"; and the restrictions which the First Homes Scheme would place on the Council to deliver affordable homes.

Councillor Hyman spoke on the report asking for the section on enforcement be strengthened and for clarification on the sections relating to s106 agreements and the Planning Committees. He highlighted some typographical errors and suggested that the Executive delegated authority to officers to make the necessary changes prior to consultation.

The Leader agreed that the sections on enforcement and planning be strengthened and proposed an additional recommendation as suggested. Councillor Townsend advised that there would be a public consultation, at which point there would be an opportunity for all to submit comments to be considered in the round. Councillor Williams also spoke in support of the report.

RESOLVED

- 1. That authority be delegated to the Head of Housing Delivery and Communities after consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders to correct any typographical errors and make changes to the paragraphs relating to planning raised in the debate; and**
- 2. that the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Update be published for public consultation between midday 17.10.22 - midday 28.11.22.**

EXE 32/22 REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP ON HOUSING ALLOCATIONS (Agenda item 8)

Councillor Paul Rivers presented the report which set out the final report and recommendations of the Housing Allocations Task and Finish Group. The Leader thanked Councillor Wilson, who had chaired the Group, and welcomed the report.

Councillor Hyman spoke on the report seeking clarification on the recommendations, some of which he was concerned about. In response, the Leader clarified the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group and the proposed date for further review which was valid due to the changing economic situation. The Leader welcomed the recommendations which represented the Council using the levers it had in a system which restricted the ability of local government to provide social housing.

The Head of Housing Delivery and Communities advised that if the Executive accepted the recommendations, officers would seek independent legal advice before being implemented. Officers would seek to provide examples or case studies in the Policy for clarification, which the Leader welcomed.

RESOLVED

That the Head of Housing Delivery and Communities be instructed to implement the following recommendations:

- 1. The Council should keep the income threshold at £60,000 per annum and the savings threshold at £30,000. However, this should be reviewed by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny committee or another appropriate O&S committee within 12-18 months.**
- 2. Establish a process to signpost applicants who are unable to join the housing register due to the income or savings threshold to Affordable Home Ownership Schemes notably shared ownership.**
- 3. Maintain the existing position that children will only be accommodated in one home even if a 50/50 residence arrangement exists. An exception will be made if there is a court order in place requiring this or if Surrey County Council Children's Services (or an equivalent organisation elsewhere) provide compelling evidence that a second home is required.**
- 4. Only housing related debts such as rent arrears and deposit scheme debts to Waverley Borough Council, housing associations and to private landlords should be taken into account when considering eligibility for either inclusion on the housing register or the allocation of a property. Other debts owed to the Council such as council tax or housing benefit overpayments would be disregarded for these purposes. Housing related debts to private sector landlords is currently under review.**
- 5. Establish a process by which the Housing Options team signpost applicants unable to join the housing needs register due to debts to local debt advice charities.**

EXE 33/22 UPDATE ON THE MUSEUM OF FARNHAM MEND APPLICATION (Agenda item 9)

Councillor Mirylees presented the report which set out an update on the application for Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) funding for the Museum of Farnham which had required a lot of work to get to the first round. In order to progress to the second round, a commitment to match funding would be required. Cllr Mirylees highlighted a minor change to the wording of recommendation iii.

The Leader thanked the Portfolio Holders and officers for their work on the project.

Councillor Hyman spoke on the item, seeking clarification on the wording of part of the report and the recommendation. Councillor Mirylees clarified that the purpose was to demonstrate the commitment required for securing MEND funding.

Councillor Clark spoke on the report, urging not to place restrictions on the project which could have adverse impacts further down the line.

RESOLVED

That the Executive agrees to the Council committing £100,000 of capital funding as a partnership contribution to an overall match fund commitment of £200,000.

However, if circumstances are as such that:

- I. the Council is awarded the full grant of £638,000 requested of MEND;**
- II. the legal and financial terms and conditions of grant are agreeable to the Council;**
- III. every effort to obtain partnership funding from external sources is being explored and is ongoing;**

the Executive supports a recommendation in principle to the Council to make up the match funding shortfall based on a value for money appraisal and the identification of an available budget to enable the project to proceed to the construction phase.

EXE 34/22 BRIGHTWELLS YARD, FARNHAM - UPDATE (Agenda item 10)

Councillor MacLeod presented the report, which set out a proposal to approve a Deed of Easement, between Waverley Borough Council, Crest Nicholson and BTR Farnham Limited; and to approve updates to the Head Lease Plan to reflect 'as built' position, in relation to the Brightwells Yard, Farnham scheme.

Councillor Hyman spoke on the report seeking clarification on why the exempt annexes were exempt due to it not being controversial. He also sought clarification on when the associated planning applications would be submitted. In response the Leader advised that the information contained in the exempt annexes was commercially sensitive. Councillor MacLeod responded to the points raised, reading out a response from the Council's legal services team. He clarified that a number of the questions raised related to planning application, which was not a matter for the Executive to consider. The Council was the landholder, not the applicant. It would be for Crest Nicholson as the applicant to make an application to the Local Planning Authority.

In response to a question from the Leader, the Council's s151 officer advised that Thames Valley Metropolitan Housing was a separate housing association which had purchased the affordable housing units in the Brightwells development.

RESOLVED

- That the grant of the proposed Deed of Easement between the Council, Crest and BTR Farnham Ltd, as set out in Annexe 1 be approved and that the Strategic Director is delegated to be able to agree easements on similar terms for those individual properties that request it and Thames Valley Metropolitan Housing.**
- That the updates to the Head Lease Plan as set out in Annexe 2 be approved.**

The meeting commenced at 6.03 pm and concluded at 7.05 pm

Executive 6
06.09.22

Chairman