

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 5 SEPTEMBER 2023

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 17 OCTOBER 2023

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

Present

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| Cllr Paul Follows (Chair) | Cllr Nick Palmer |
| Cllr Peter Clark (Vice Chair) | Cllr Paul Rivers |
| Cllr Tony Fairclough | Cllr Liz Townsend |
| Cllr Victoria Kiehl | Cllr Steve Williams |
| Cllr Kika Mirylees | |

Apologies

Cllr Mark Merryweather

Also Present

Councillor Jerry Hyman

EXE 37/23
MINUTES (Agenda item 2)

37.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 August 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

EXE 38/23
DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

38.1 There were no declarations of interest raised under this heading.

EXE 39/23
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

39.1 There were no questions from members of the public.

EXE 40/23
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 5)

40.1 The Leader advised the Executive that a question had been raised by Councillor Weldon under part 5. He added that the question had since been withdrawn and Councillor Weldon had met with the portfolio holder prior to the meeting where the question had been addressed.

EXE 41/23

LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES (Agenda item 6)

- 41.1 The Deputy Leader advised that he was pleased to receive a briefing on the Farnham infrastructure programme from Surrey County Council and looked forward to its future progress.
- 41.2 Cllr Mirylees advised that the Museum was on track. Cllr Mirylees noted that with regard to the Edge, she had been asked to organise a meeting and the work was still ongoing.
- 41.3 Cllr Rivers advised that he had requested the Housing Team prepare a letter to be sent to the Senior Living Accommodation residents about the RAAC position so that those residents receive the appropriate degree of comfort.
- 41.4 Cllr Townsend advised that the council had received confirmation that the hearing for the legal challenge of the adopted Local Plan Part 2, would take place in person at the Royal Courts of Justice on the 7&8 November 2023. She noted that she would be attending with officers.
- 41.5 Cllr Townsend informed the Executive and officers that she was delighted to see that the Business Improvement Districts are progressing for Godalming and Farnham and that she hoped that the ballot for Godalming would be going out soon. She also noted that the council had funded a programme with IncuHive from January to June of this year which had helped to support 78 local businesses and contributed to creating 22 new jobs in the borough.
- 41.6 Cllr Williams advised that preparation for the annual update of the Carbon Neutrality Plan was complete and the 2023 plan was being reviewed by the Executive and would go to Overview and Scrutiny on the 19 February 2024.
- 41.7 Cllr Williams informed the Executive that there was a 39% reduction on the baseline year which was a good achievement, however two thirds of the boroughs historic carbon emissions needed to be reduced to net 0 over the remaining 7 years.
- 41.8 Cllr Williams advised that the administration would act on sustainable transport and was delighted that Waverley would be one of the first boroughs to introduce the new on-demand electric bus and the scheme had gone live in Farnham and Cranleigh and would be rolled out to Godalming in the next 12 months.
- 41.9 Cllr Williams advised that with regard to Green Spaces, following a consultation, design briefs were being prepared for a tendering process for three playgrounds. He noted that CIL bids were being prepared for the refurbishment of three more playgrounds.

- 41.10 Cllr Williams advised that the refurbishment of the internal areas of the Broadwater Park changing rooms had started and would be completed in three months.
- 41.11 The Leader advised that with regard to the Edge, he was currently seeking a meeting between Waverly Borough Council, Surrey County Council and the Weydon MAT to start looking forward and working as one unit in terms of the future use of the Edge. The Leader also noted that he had met with Sport Haslemere and the Herald to discuss the council plans for the Edge.
- 41.12 The Leader noted that the building was owned by Surrey County Council and he wanted to ensure that it was run for the leisure of Haslemere. The Leader advised that he had requested the meeting be chaired by the Mayor of Haslemere as an independent party and that Sport Haslemere attends as an observer with Cllr Mirylees and Cllr Natalie Bramall from Surrey County Council.
- 41.13. The Leader also noted that he requested that one single communication come out of the meeting from all three parties which clearly states what is happening next so that residents and the sports clubs have some certainty before the end of September.
- 41.14 The Leader thanked those involved the 69 Highstreet matters last week, he advised that was great to see it finally in place and would not be too much longer before the council could announce the new tenant.
- 41.15 The Leader informed the Executive that there was not a wider Broadwater matter on the agenda, but it would be scheduled very soon and he would be hosting a briefing for Waverley and Godalming Town Councillors to discuss the current status and the next steps.

EXE 42/23

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (Agenda item 7)

- 42.1 The Leader advised that there were no recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny as there had been no meetings during the summer. He noted that the first meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year would take place in late September.

EXE 43/23

TEMPORARY SHARED STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS (Agenda item 8)

- 43.1 Cllr Kiehl welcomed the opportunity to introduce the paper and answer any questions. Cllr Kiehl also thanked officers for their work on the report.

- 43.2 Cllr Kiehl advised that the report sought the approval of the principle of shared staffing on a temporary basis between Waverly Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council to support the collaboration and ensure opportunities to do so between the two authorities were not missed. She noted that the temporary arrangement did not bind either council to anything permanent or effect any future decision regarding the collaboration programme.
- 43.3 Cllr Kiehl noted, that by agreeing the report, the Executive would authorise the governance to be set up and be in place to allow both authorities to have interim shared staffing arrangements. Cllr Kiehl also highlighted that this was made clear in paragraph 5.1 of the report.
- 43.4 Cllr Kiehl advised that the Executive was also being asked to delegate decision on temporary shared staffing to the Joint Chief Executive as the Head of Paid Services. She advised that it was an appropriate delegation and one that should be in place to make routine decisions about staff resources in an efficient manner. She noted that Guildford Borough Council had agreed a similar decision at a meeting of their Executive in July and the report in front of the Executive mirrored GBC report and the recommendations had the same effect.
- 43.5 Cllr Hyman queried whether the arrangement was a plan to help Guildford Borough Council out of its current crisis, and he felt that there was not a great deal of information within the report. He noted that he had a number of questions that were not answered in the report. He advised that the report had been brought to the Executive without Scrutiny having prior knowledge. Cllr Hyman asked if GBC had imposed a recruitment freeze? and if WBC was assisting GBC, at what cost?
- 43.6 Cllr Hyman referred to page 21 paragraph 6.1 and noted that the agreement was supported by both Executive's, and it seemed to him that WBC had agreed to something before it had reviewed the vision. He noted that he had not seen a plan as to how the WBC would assist GBC and how it would benefit WBC. He sought further explanation that WBC was doing the right thing for its residents. Cllr Hyman queried the speed in which the decision was brought to the Executive. Cllr Hayman queried whether WBC would receive good quality support and advice, or would it be going where it was needed most?
- 43.7 Cllr Hyman sought a commitment from the Leader for immediate affirmation that council staff from both councils would be accountable for providing all relevant information and answers necessary questions on request and in good time.
- 43.8 The Leader advised that there were no codifying rules to force someone be honest if they were intent on being dishonest. He advised that his approach was to consider everyone to be open, reasonable, and honest, until someone gave him evidence that they were not. The Leader advised that the

agreement was a mechanism to effectively enable staff sharing between GBC and WBC.

- 43.9 The Leader noted that GBC had already agreed the equivalent arrangements and there had been a number of instances where WBC had used staff from GBC to fill gaps and referred to Private Sector Housing as an example. The Leader stressed that it was not a one-way deal and WBC had already benefited from the support of GBC staff.
- 43.10 The Leader confirmed that GBC did have a recruitment freeze, however they were recruiting by exception, he advised that it was a question for GBC. The Leader advised that the initial vision for sharing of resources, both material and people was set out in the July 2021 meeting and that this was the first step towards joint working arrangements. He noted that another report (under Local Government Act section 113) detailing post locations and staff reporting lines, would be subject to scrutiny later in the calendar year.
- 43.11 Cllr Kiehl thanked Cllr Hyman for his comments, she advised that the report was a technical paper to enable WBC to share staff on an interim basis and as the report stated, it would be when it was in the best interest for both councils to do so.
- 43.12 Cllr Liz Townsend spoke in support of the report and emphasised the importance of improving services to WBC residents by working in partnership with GBC. She noted that the council had identified opportunities where it could use the expertise from staff across both councils to improve services and to become more agile.

The Executive RESOLVED to:

- I. Approve the principle of sharing staff between Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council, on a temporary basis, where appropriate to support the collaboration programme;**
- II. Delegate authority to the Joint Chief Executive, to approve, subject to a business case, future temporary staff sharing arrangements between Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council, to support the collaboration and transformation programme;**
- III. Delegate authority to the Joint Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services to enter into an agreement between Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council for the sharing of their staff on a temporary basis.**

Reasons

1. To ensure that officers have sufficient agility in operational decision making to embrace opportunities that may arise regarding temporary staffing arrangements, that are likely to be beneficial to both councils in terms of cost, efficiency and skills, whilst retaining flexibility for any future longer-term arrangements brought about through the Transformation and Collaboration Programme.

2. To ensure that there is a robust governance process around the sharing of staff on an interim basis, including arrangements for the sharing of costs, terminating any such agreements and resolving any disputes in a fair and transparent manner.

EXE 44/23

NEW BUILD HOUSING DELIVERY - AARONS HILL, GODALMING (Agenda item 9)

- 44.1 Cllr Palmer introduced the report, he advised that it was a project that had been ongoing for some time and was moving to the next stage. He advised that the project had already been approved by Executive and Full Council, however the impact of inflation meant that it needed to be reviewed again. Cllr Palmer noted that the background for the report would be heard in the exempt part of the meeting.
- 44.2 Cllr Palmer confirmed that the four homes were very much in keeping with the Council's priorities, two of which were directly dealing with cases of homelessness and all four were in line with the Council's Strategy. He noted that the overall impact of the proposal remained financially viable and very satisfactory.
- 44.3 Cllr Hyman raised a query regarding the £23 million investment on the development at Upper Aaron's Hill. Cllr Hyman sought further information on the return value and how many homes the Council would gain from its investment. He also sought an update on the total investment value in writing after the meeting.
- 44.4 The Leader advised Cllr Hyman that he was referring to the redevelopment at Ockford Ridge, he noted that Cllr Hyman was fortunate that the Project Manager, Louisa Blundell, and both the ward councillors for Central Ockford were in attendance and may be able to respond to his questions.
- 44.5 The Leader asked Louisa Blundell if she recalled the net gain on homes for Ockford Ridge. Louisa Blundell advised that she was unable to recall the figure but would respond to Cllr Hyman in writing after the meeting.
- 44.6 Cllr Townsend spoke of her support for the report, she advised that it met with the Council's Corporate Strategy to build more, build better and build for life affordable housing. She noted that she was not surprised that the costs had increased due to inflation.
- 44.7 Cllr Rivers also spoke in support of the report and congratulated the Housing Team for their success in gaining partial grant funding for the two homeless one-bedroom flats.

- 44.8 Cllr Palmer advised that if the council did not receive the research, then it would have lost its grants from Homes England and it would have been unable to provide the homeless accommodation.
- 44.9 Cllr Williams echoed his support for the proposal and commended the work of the Housing Team. He welcomed and endorsed the notion of sustainable homes and was delighted to see the gradual improvement of the quality sustainable homes being built in Waverley.
- 44.10 The Leader thanked Louisa Blundell for all her hard work and her engagement work with local residents and all the stakeholder groups.

The Executive RESOLVED to:

- I. Give delegated authority to the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services to approve the final form of any legal agreements and to Strategic Director (Place) to enter into the JCT Contract with the preferred contractor.**
- II. Give delegated authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to approve pre contract agreements with the preferred contractor to enable the development of the project and authorise spend in accordance with the budget.**
- III. Give delegated authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to enter into any related contractual documentation (including collateral warranties or agreements) relating to the project.**
- IV. Give delegated authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to enter into any ancillary agreements related to the project provided that these are within the project budget.**
- V. Give delegated authority to the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services to approve and enter into a Grant Agreement with Homes England for the provision of Rough Sleeper Accommodation and delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Place to administer the grant.**
- VI. Approve of the allocation of an additional £80k budget to be met through a combination of capital receipts and borrowing.**

Reasons

1. The Executive and Full Council have previously approved the Business Case for this site and the recommended authority is required to enter into the contract with a build contractor and approve additional budget to facilitate delivery of the new homes on this site through a JCT Design and Build Contract. Through delivery of the project there may be a requirement to enter into project related contractual documents or ancillary agreements.
2. The Waverley Corporate Strategy 2020-2025 sets out the Vision and Strategic Priorities for the Council. One of the strategic priorities is to 'provide good quality housing for all income levels.'

3. Build More, Build Better, Build for Life Affordable Homes Delivery Strategy 2022 – 2025 sets out the Council’s commitment to build homes to buy or rent for households from all income levels. The strategy has been supported by evidence studies including the Waverley Housing Affordability Study 2021.
4. Delivery of 4 homes at Godalming including two to provide rough sleeper accommodation which will be grant funded in part by Homes England.

EXE 45/23

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 10)

EXE 46/23

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATE FOR THE ROLE OF PROJECT OFFICER (Agenda item 11)

The Executive RESOLVED to approve the recommendations set out in the Exempt report, and detailed in the Exempt Minutes.

EXE 47/23

RECRUITMENT - TENANT INVOLVEMENT OFFICER GROWTH BID (Agenda item 12)

The Executive RESOLVED to approve the recommendations set out in the Exempt report and detailed in the Exempt Minutes.

EXE 48/23

ANY OTHER ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN EXEMPT SESSION (Agenda item 13)

48.1 There were no other issues to be considered in the exempt session.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 6.43 pm

Chairman