

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 9 JANUARY 2024

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 20 FEBRUARY 2024

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

**Present**

Cllr Paul Follows (Chair)	Cllr Nick Palmer
Cllr Tony Fairclough (Vice Chair)	Cllr Paul Rivers
Cllr Victoria Kiehl	Cllr Liz Townsend
Cllr Mark Merryweather	Cllr Steve Williams
Cllr George Murray	

**Apologies**

Cllr Kika Mirylees

**Also Present**

Cllrs Crowe and Munro

EXE 122/23 MINUTES (Agenda item 2)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 28 November 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

EXE 123/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

EXE 124/23 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 4)

There were none.

EXE 125/23 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda item 5)

There were none.

EXE 126/23 LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES (Agenda item 6)

The Leader warmly welcomed Councillor Murray to his first Executive meeting as an Executive Member; and Councillor Fairclough to his first Executive meeting as Deputy Leader of the Council. The Leader then expressed his disappointment that Thames Water had not compensated those affected by water and sewerage issues during November. At the invitation of the Leader, Executive Members gave the following updates:

- Councillor Fairclough was delighted that the Reel Cinema in Farnham would open on 2 February.
- Councillor Kiehl was pleased that improvements to the Constitution had progressed through the Standards and General Purposes Committee and

would be considered by Extraordinary Council on 24 January. Thanks were expressed to Officers, together with those that had worked on the successful Joint Chief Executive recruitment. In the coming months, Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be engaged in considering Business Cases coming forward from the Collaboration and Transformation programme.

- Councillor Merryweather expressed his frustration at the short-term nature of the Government's funding settlement. Whilst a balanced budget would be achieved, inflation continued and the outlook for 2024-25 remained challenging.
- Councillor Murray was pleased to have joined the Executive and was grateful for the welcome from fellow Executive Members and Officers alike.
- Councillor Rivers stated that Executive Members together with Officers had endorsed a response to a consultation on new powers to be introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing.
- Councillor Townsend echoed the Leader's disappointment with Thames Water. Cranleigh residents had suffered sewerage discharge on residential roads and into their homes and gardens. The Executive Working Group proposed at the State of the Borough Debate would commence its work, engaging with Town and Parish Councils to focus on the pressure that new developments put on infrastructure, together with the apparent lack of additional resilience being offered by Thames Water.
- Councillor Williams highlighted the connection between flooding and extreme weather conditions and the news that the court of appeal had overturned the Council's attempt together with Protect Dunsfold and the Good Law Project to stop UKOG from drilling for fossil fuels in the Borough. The Government's policy clearly conflicted with the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and would be writing to Jeremy Hunt MP for an explanation. Cllr Williams disagreed with UKOG's assertion that the project would be beneficial to local economic and energy interests. The Council would continue to use all legal means to prevent UKOG from commencing work, particularly in seeking compliance with the 32 planning conditions imposed, including around vehicle movements.

The Leader concurred with Cllr Williams and reiterated that there was no legal means to prevent the export of the extracted gas outside of the UK and consequentially, there was no grounds for the Government's argument that the gas extracted would be beneficial to UK national security.

#### **EXE 127/23 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES** (Agenda item 7)

The Leader stated that the Overview and Scrutiny Committees were scheduled to meet later in the month, and any recommendations from those meetings would be received at a subsequent meeting of the Executive.

#### **EXE 128/23 HOUSING LATENT DEFECT REMEDIATION, FARNHAM** (Agenda item 8)

Councillor Paul Rivers introduced the report and explained that properties at 1,2, 3 and 4 Cedar Close were delivered as part of the new build housing delivery programme completed in 2017. Those homes had developed latent building defects which resulted in noisy floor joists and uneven first floor levels. The defects were

present in No 4 Cedar Close but were successfully remedied in July 2019. The remaining three properties had been due to be completed but the impact of Covid-19 meant that access had not been possible. Those properties were now due to be remedied. Tenants were not expected to have to move out whilst the works took place, and it was estimated that the works would be completed promptly.

There being no further discussion, the Executive **RESOLVED** unanimously to:

1. Use the current Latent Defects budget to procure a Contractor to carry out the required remedial works.
2. Allocate a £114,225 budget from Latent Defects budget that exists within the Housing Revenue Account Delivery Budget.
3. Delegate authority to the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services to approve the final form of any legal agreement including JCT Contract.
4. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Wellbeing) to enter into any related contract documentation or ancillary agreements required to the remedying of these latent defects.

Reasons:

- I. The defects in these properties are long standing and will only be permanently resolved by the proposed type of intervention.
- II. 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.'

#### EXE 129/23 HOUSING DELIVERY - CHURT (Agenda item 9)

Councillor Palmer introduced the report which sought approval of the demolition of an underused Community Room in Churt with a first floor flat and garage; and works associated with implementation of planning consent. The demolition approval would be ahead of an approval for a full business case to deliver a development of 4 sustainable homes to meet local housing need.

Councillor Munro, in attendance as a Visiting Ward Member, concurred that the Community Room had not been in use for some time and expressed his support for the recommendations, together with the provision of visitor parking.

There being no further discussion, the Executive **RESOLVED** to approve:

1. The demolition of the existing Community Room with a First Floor Flat and garage together with works associated with implementation of the planning consent in advance of submission of a full business case for the scheme.
2. The allocation of an £120k budget from reserves to commission consultant services and demolition contractor to demolish the existing property and associated works to implement the planning consent. This budget allocation will be included within financial viability appraisal that will accompany the business case and full project budget request for the new build scheme when it is bought forward.
3. To delegate authority to the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services to approve the final form of any legal agreements associated the

demolition of existing property and implementation of the planning permission.

4. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to enter into any related contractual documentation relating to this stage of this project.
5. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to enter into any ancillary agreements related to the project provided that these are within the allocated budget.

Reasons:

- I. The existing community room has been vacant since 2019 when the lunch club moved to Quinnettes. Planning consent was obtained in September 2021 and is due to lapse in September 2024. It is envisaged the site would be developed along with an adjacent site at Crossways Close which is currently undergoing planning revisions. To avoid losing the planning approval for Parkhurst Fields under lapsed time, it is proposed to progress with demolition and early stage works to implement the consent.
- II. 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.'
- III. 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.
- IV. Demolition of the community room will keep the planning consent in force for the delivery of 4 new two bed sustainable homes in Churt with two parking bays for each property and 4 extra parking bays for visitors.

**The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 6.25 pm**

**Chairman**