

# Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at Pippbrook, Dorking, from 7.00pm to 8.05pm

Present:

Executive Members: Councillors Chris Townsend (Leader/Chairman), Simon Ling, Vivienne Michael, Paul Newman, John Northcott and Charles Yarwood.

Non-Executive Members: Councillors Margaret Cooksey, Stephen Cooksey and David Preedy.

## 58. Minutes

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman/Leader.

## 59. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Friend.

## 60. Disclosure of Interests

None.

## 61. Councillor Question Time

No questions were received.

## 62. Report of the Scrutiny Committee

The Scrutiny Committee met on 6<sup>th</sup> January and considered a number of reports which were included on the Executive agenda for 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, with the approval of the Leader, undertook to submit feedback to the Executive during their consideration of each report. The Committee had also received a presentation from Places for People Leisure on their management of the Dorking Sports Centre, and in another of the series of updates from Service Managers a presentation on the Benefits Service. Both had been valuable presentations and had provided Members an opportunity to raise issues in relation to both areas. Finally, the Chairman advised that the Committee had considered the draft Homelessness Review 2014 and Homelessness Strategy 2015-2020 prior to its submission to the executive on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015. Members had welcomed this early consideration as it allowed the Committee's comments to be incorporated into the final report to the Executive.

## 63. 2015/16 Council Meeting Schedule

**RESOLVED:** That the meeting schedule for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted be approved.

## 64. Thames River Basin Draft Flood Risk Management Plan

The Executive considered the draft Flood Risk Management Plan insofar as it related to the River Mole catchment within and adjoining Mole Valley, and the Council's proposed response to the Plan. The Executive Member for Community and Resident Services advised that Members would be updated on the Leatherhead and Middle Mole flood risk management scheme in due course, probably in 2016. Two points requiring clarification from the Environment Agency had been raised by Members during Scrutiny Committee's consideration of the report. The Executive Member reported that responses to the points raised had now been received and circulated to Members earlier that evening.

Members cited examples of recent proactive actions by the Environment Agency and the Executive was pleased to note that support for and contact with local groups and residents was improving.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee advised that the Committee supported the response to the

Environment Agency consultation as set out in the report and had no objections to the Executive accepting the recommendation.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposed response to the draft Flood Risk Management Plan set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted be approved.

**65. Consultation on the draft update to the River Basin Management Plan for the Thames River Basin District [KEY DECISION]**

A report detailing the Council's response to the first draft update of the management plan for the Thames Basin District was considered by the Executive. The Executive Member for planning advised that the proposed response reflected the importance the Council placed on safeguarding the water environment.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee reported that the Committee had been satisfied with the proposed response to the Environment Agency consultation and, as such, supported the Executive's acceptance of the recommendation. However, the Committee had expressed concern with regard to water quality issues in particular areas. The Leader advised that these concerns would be raised in the Council's response to the River Basin Management Plan.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to the classification as poor of the Dorking North Downs Chalk and Reigate Lower Greensand Sub-Catchments and suggested that the consultation response to question 2 should state that priority should be given to these two areas. The Executive noted that, as these areas had Protected Area status for ground water, they would be a priority, but it was agreed that the response should be amended as suggested to stress the Council's view regarding their priority.

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to the amendment of the response to question 2 to include a statement that priority should be given to the Reigate Lower Greensand and North Downs Chalk Sub-Catchments, the responses to the set questions raised in the Environment Agency's consultation on the Draft Thames Basin Catchment Management Plan as set out in Section 6 of the report submitted be agreed.

**66. The Future of Dorking Football Ground, Meadowbank [KEY DECISION]**

The Executive considered a report which recommended the provision of new football and community facilities at Dorking Football Ground.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee advised that the report had been welcomed by the Committee, who felt that it offered a great opportunity to provide much needed community facilities in the centre of Dorking. Concern had been raised about the risk of not meeting the targeted deadline in 2016, but the Committee had been reassured that the officers and the Executive Member were aware of this risk and the need for it to be managed carefully. Overall the Committee had been happy for the recommended option 2 to be accepted by the Executive.

The Executive Member acknowledged that the timescale for the project was ambitious, but he was confident that it could be achieved.

In response to a question regarding the results of the Meadowbank consultation exercise, Members were advised that although the suggestions regarding a café and toilets were included in this project, other suggestions were being addressed by the relevant Council department, for example a refurbishment of the children's playground had been timetabled and an appraisal of the sports field would be undertaken with a view to identifying improvements.

The Leader of the Opposition expressed concerns that the business case for the project was inadequate and suggested that the Executive should agree only that expenditure that was necessary to progress the project at this stage, with the remainder of the expenditure being approved in due course on the basis of a more detailed business plan.

The Executive Member for Assets advised that a further report would be submitted to the Executive in June when more detailed financial information, particularly in respect of grant funding, would be

available. However, the applications for grant funding did need to be supported by a firm financial commitment from Mole Valley District Council. The deadline for the submission of the application to Sport England was 26<sup>th</sup> January so a decision from the Executive in respect of the Council's funding for the project was required before that date.

Executive Members supported the proposal and noted the public enthusiasm for the project.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the refurbishment of the Dorking Football Ground, Meadowbank at an estimated cost of £4m (construction costs and professional fees) less any secured grant funding be approved. The scheme includes: the replacement of all football facilities on the site and the provision of a 3G artificial playing surface, all to Football Association standards; and the construction of a new community based well being centre including multi-purpose sports hall, cafeteria, soft play area and meeting rooms.
- (2) To agree to move forward with the development of a detailed design scheme and tender documentation, submit a full planning application, go to the market and move forward with the construction phase.
- (3) To actively pursue any grants that may be available to help reduce the cost on the public purse.
- (4) That the Corporate Head of Service for Assets be authorised to examine the options for operating the facility and make a recommendation to the June 2015 Executive.

**67. Month 8 2014/15 Budget and Performance Report**

The Executive considered a report detailing progress during the year to date with regard to performance indicators and priorities, and the outcome of the monthly budget monitoring exercise for the end of November. The Executive Member for Finance and Corporate Services outlined the budgetary changes since the last reported position to the Executive.

With regard to performance, the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate Services reported that 14 (82%) out of 17 performance indicators were on or above target and three (18%) were slightly off target. A number of key achievements across the Council's three priority areas were highlighted.

In response to a query from the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee regarding the underspend on disability adaptations and the LINKS playing field at St John's School, the Chief Executive, in the absence of the Executive Member for Wellbeing, advised that work on both issues was ongoing and undertook to provide a written update to the Chairman.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee referred to the information in the report regarding s106 contributions and the recent press report which alleged a high level of unspent funding. The Executive Member for Finance and Corporate Services advised that the current balance of unspent funding was approximately £1m and not the £3m stated in the press report. The Chief Executive confirmed that the press report had been inaccurate and advised that briefings on the use of s106 contributions had been provided for Parish Clerks and other local groups and bodies as well as for Executive Members. She encouraged Members to engage with officers regarding s106 contributions if they had any concerns or queries.

Finally, the Chief Executive undertook to arrange for a written response to be provided to the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee in respect of his query regarding the anticipated savings from the Highways Horticulture contract detailed in paragraph 3.16 of the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council's financial and performance position for Month 8 2014/15 be noted.