

Runnymede Borough CouncilCORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE15 October 2020 at 7.30 p.m. via MS Teams

Members of the Committee present: Councillors N Prescott (Chairman), J Gracey (Vice-Chairman), A Alderson, I Chaudhri, D Cotty, L Gillham, M Heath, J Hulley, R King, M Maddox, D Whyte and M Willingale.

Members of the Committee absent: None.

Councillors D Clarke, M Cressey, R Edis, E Gill, C Howorth, S Lewis, I Mullens, J Olorenshaw and J Sohi also attended.

237 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 10 September 2020 and 24 September 2020 were confirmed as correct records. As the meeting was being held remotely using MS Teams, the Chairman would sign these two sets of minutes when this was physically possible.

238 EGHAM GATEWAY WEST – NAMING AND COLOUR BRANDING OF THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AND SCHEME NAME

At its last meeting on 24 September 2020, the Committee had considered a report on the naming of the residential buildings for the Egham Gateway West development. At that meeting, the Committee had also agreed that it would be appropriate for the Egham Gateway West development to be renamed. The Committee had agreed to defer this item for further consultation on the naming of the residential buildings and on alternative names for the development and had agreed that a report would be submitted to its next meeting.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the report on the naming of the residential buildings that had been submitted to its last meeting. The Committee also considered suggestions which had been made by Committee Members for names for the residential buildings (which were set out on a Second Part I Addendum) and for a new name for the Egham Gateway West development scheme.

The Committee noted that some Egham residents had put forward the suggestion that the residential buildings be named after historic local buildings. The Committee considered this suggestion and also a proposal from a Member of the Committee that the buildings be named after Magna Carta barons. The Committee also considered two alternative suggestions for names for the development which were the Magna Square Development or the Egham Nexus development. Having considered and debated these alternative suggestions, a majority of Members of the Committee favoured the historic local buildings option for the residential blocks and the Magna Square development option for the new scheme name.

The Committee also agreed that officers would consult with Ward Councillors and report to a future meeting of the Committee on the colour branding for the residential buildings in the development.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) **the residential buildings in the development be named as follows:-**

**Block A: Corn Merchant House**  
**Block B: Parish Hall**

**Block C: Gem House  
Block D: Holloway View; and**

- ii) **the Egham Gateway West development be renamed as the Magna Square development.**

239 PROPOSED VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY SCHEME

The Chairman had agreed that this item be admitted to the Agenda as an item of urgent business for the special circumstances and urgency as set out below:-

Special Circumstances

The report was not able to be completed by the time of the despatch of the main agenda for the meeting.

Urgency

To enable the Committee to approve the proposed scheme so that the Council could seek volunteers for redundancy or redundancy and early retirement to assist in creating efficiency savings without delay.

The Committee considered a report on a proposed Voluntary Redundancy Scheme to enable the Council to seek volunteers for redundancy or redundancy and early retirement, to assist in creating efficiency savings.

As a consequence of the Council's unexpected and significant expenditure to deal with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council faced a serious financial situation over approximately the next three years. In essence, the Council needed to save £2 million each year in order to resolve the Council's financial difficulties. As a result, the Council was currently looking at a series of measures to create efficiency savings, one of which was a proposed voluntary redundancy trawl.

In order to make substantial savings, it was proposed to seek volunteers before Christmas for staff who would request voluntary redundancy or, if employees were aged over 55 years, voluntary redundancy and early retirement, with a view to any staff whose applications were approved leaving the Council by the end of the current financial year (i.e. by the end of March 2021). The Committee noted the proposed scheme along with the accompanying forms. Under the proposed scheme, all requests would be considered by a Voluntary Severance Panel which would consist of the Chief Executive, the Assistant Chief Executive and the Corporate Head of Resources and Organisational Development. The Panel would be looking at factors such as service needs going forward, whether the service could be re-engineered to meet its objectives without that individual and affordability in considering whether to recommend requests for approval.

The Committee noted the effect of the Exit Pay Cap legislation on the proposed scheme. The Committee also noted that until the end of December 2020, there was a contradiction between the exit Pay Cap Regulations and the Local Government Pension Scheme and Compensation Regulations. This meant that no employee potentially affected by the Cap could leave the Council's employment before the end of December 2020.

The Committee noted an Equality Screening form which had been completed on the proposed scheme. At this point it was not known which staff would make a request and therefore the costs involved. However, it was estimated that approximately 20 redundancies would be needed to make sufficient efficiency savings. It was proposed to capitalise the redundancy costs. The Committee noted that, in each case, the payback period associated with making a voluntary redundancy would depend on the salary of the member of staff who was being made voluntarily redundant. However, it was envisaged that

the scheme would make genuine savings in the region of 18 months to 2 years after it had been implemented.

The report proposed that the Chief Executive be given delegated authority to approve up to 20 redundancies or redundancy and early retirement requests subject to affordability after the requests had been recommended for approval by the Voluntary Severance Panel. The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to amend this proposal so that the Chairmen of the relevant Committees would be consulted on any requests recommended for approval by the Voluntary Severance Panel and following such consultation, if it was appropriate to offer voluntary redundancy, the decision in each case on granting voluntary redundancy and the associated financial package would be made by the Corporate Management Committee. The scheme forms would be changed to reflect this amended decision making process and in Form 2B the word “board” would be deleted and substituted with the word “Panel”.

The Committee supported the scheme as amended as a first step to achieve staffing efficiency savings required as a result of Covid-19. The Council was endeavouring to avoid having to make compulsory redundancies wherever possible and the scheme would further that objective.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the voluntary redundancy scheme be approved with the amendment to the operation of the scheme as set out in resolution ii) below; and**
- ii) the Chairmen of the relevant Committees be consulted on any requests recommended for approval by the Voluntary Severance Panel and following such consultation, if it is appropriate to offer voluntary redundancy, the decision in each case on granting voluntary redundancy and the associated financial package be made by the Corporate Management Committee.**

240 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2021/2022

The Committee considered the proposed Calendar of meetings for the next Municipal Year which would run from May 2021-May 2022. The proposed Calendar and diary schedule of the Committee dates, as shown at Appendices ‘D’ and ‘E’ to the agenda, were recommended to Full Council for approval. The Calendar had been drawn up to avoid meetings other than Planning Committee taking place in school holidays wherever possible as a number of Members had school age children and preferred meetings to be scheduled outside school holidays. However, sometimes scheduling meetings in school holidays could not be avoided. The Chief Executive had delegated authority to make ad hoc minor changes to the Calendar of meetings in consultation with the respective Leaders of the political groups, and special meetings of Committees could be arranged where circumstances dictated. It was agreed that officers would look at the Calendar again and establish whether there were any meetings scheduled within school holidays and if there were, in consultation with Members, would see whether any rearrangements were possible.

The Calendar largely followed the usual well established pattern. However, Members noted that in May 2021, the Borough Election, County Election and Police Commissioner Election would all be held on the first Thursday in May as usual. Meetings of Member Working Parties were not included in the Calendar as these were informal meetings which were not open to the public and Surrey County Council Joint Committee meetings were not listed as the Council had not yet been advised of the dates of those meetings.

**RECOMMEND to Full Council on 22 October 2020 that-**

**the Calendar of meetings for May 2021 – May 2022, as attached at Appendices ‘D’ and ‘E’ to the agenda, be approved.**

241 THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT CODE

The Committee noted the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Management (FM) Code which was designed to identify a local authority’s risks to financial sustainability and introduce an overarching framework of assurance which built on existing financial management good practice. Local authorities had to apply the requirements of the Code with effect from April 1 2020 although CIPFA considered that 2020/21 would be a “shadow year” towards full implementation. The first full year of compliance would therefore be 2021/22 but early adoption was encouraged. Officers were currently working through the FM Code guidance and would be reporting back to the Standards and Audit Committee on where the Council currently met the criteria and what officers were doing to ensure that any gaps in compliance were addressed.

242 QUARTER 2 2020/2021- PROJECT PORTFOLIO REPORTING

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee noted a report providing them with a progress update on the delivery of the Council’s Project Portfolio up until the end of the second quarter of 2020/21. The Committee noted project updates for the fifteen grade A and eight grade B projects ranging from the initiation to execution stages, the key project achievements over the second quarter of 2020/21 and the project execution delays highlighted and the corrective actions in place to address them.

The Committee also considered a Project Portfolio Dashboard which provided a summary of the projects. The Service and Digital Transformation Member Working Party had made no amendments to the Dashboard at its meeting on 7 October 2020. It was proposed to include the Dashboard as a part of future quarterly project reports and the Committee approved this proposal subject to the deletion of the word “comprehensive” from the description of “housing services”.

Since the last report to the Committee, the Surrey Towers refurbishment feasibility study project had been completed. The Tenancy Audit and Enforcement Anti-Social Behaviour noise app project had also been completed which allowed the Tenancy team to make a more accurate assessment of noise nuisance associated with Council housing. The end date timelines for the telephony solutions – SIP Trunks project and the replacement cash receipting system project could not be confirmed at present because of a delay in installation of the essential Information Technology infrastructure required to complete these projects. The action being taken to achieve this installation was noted. A Member reported that local residents were pleased to note that metal railings had been installed at Cabrera Avenue open space in Virginia Water and thanked Council officers and the Cabrera Trust for their work on this project.

**RESOLVED that –**

**the Project Portfolio Dashboard be included in the standard report format for future Quarterly reports subject to the deletion of the word “comprehensive” from the description of “housing services” in the Dashboard.**

243 PROPOSED REVIEW OF DIGITAL SERVICES

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered a review of the Council's Digital Services Staffing Structure to increase efficiency, improve service delivery, meet the needs of customers and enhance resilience.

The structure had been reviewed and the proposed new structure which was recommended for approval by the Committee subject to staff and Unison consultation would create two senior managers who would each be responsible for either the technical or transformational areas of the service. It would enhance resilience, governance and transparency and bring the Post Room and Electronic Data Management System line management into Digital Services. It would maintain effective and secure data management, improve security and infrastructure and integrate the Geographic Information Service and the technical support for the new website. Value for money for the new Content Relationship Management System (CRM) and the new Council website (also known as the CMS, i.e. Content Management System) would be maximised and job security and progression to maintain key staff would be provided.

There would be minor changes to existing posts and the transfer of staff from the Post Room. Two new posts would be introduced. One would protect the Council's investment in the CRM and CMS and the other would strengthen the Service Desk and support the new telephony systems. These changes would require investment and the approval of a supplementary revenue estimate in the sum reported. However, it was anticipated that this investment would be required for potentially 18 months and then be offset from future savings generated from efficiencies in the CRM and CMS as on-line transactions increased. Consideration had been given to reducing resources in the Service Desk in order to fund these Digital Services staffing structure changes, but this course of action was not recommended by officers as there were so many staff and Members working remotely in order to comply with Covid-19 restrictions. The Committee noted that the supplementary revenue estimate was an invest to save solution and that this temporary growth would be returned as transformation savings were made.

The number of posts in the proposed structure increased from 15.8 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) to 19.4 FTE. Three staff would be transferred from other areas of the Council which would provide new skills and perspective on customer engagement and channel shift. The Committee noted a timeline for the proposed implementation with a "go live" date of 1 January 2021 and a methodology for the transition from the current to the proposed structure. An Equality Impact Assessment would be produced and the comments of Unison on the proposals were noted.

Some Members of the Committee indicated that they would have wished to have received in the report more details of the financial benefits and savings that would accrue from the restructuring. All Members of the Committee supported the proposed changes which were required to strengthen the current Digital Services Team and make it more innovative. The restructure would provide resilience around key staff and systems which would more closely meet the needs of customers.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) the staffing structure of the Digital Services Team set out at Exempt Appendix '3' to the Agenda and the associated cost as an invest to save solution be approved, subject to staff and Unison consultation; and**

- ii) **a supplementary revenue estimate in the sum reported be approved for this purpose.**

244 CHERTSEY BUSINESS PARK – LETTINGS

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered a report on lettings at Chertsey Business Park. The Committee considered and approved agreed heads of terms for a letting of one of the units in Chertsey Business Park. It was noted that this was the first letting on the scheme.

The Committee also agreed that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and the Assistant Chief Executive to approve further lettings on the scheme, provided that the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 2.12 of the report were achieved. These officers would work with the Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration in exercising this delegated authority and it was noted that officers would seek to improve on the minimum criteria wherever possible for future lettings.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) **the agreed heads of terms for a letting of one of the units in Chertsey Business Park be approved as reported, this being the first proposed letting on this scheme; and**
- ii) **delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Assistant Chief Executive to approve further lettings on this scheme, provided that the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 2.12 of the report are achieved.**

245 TRAVELODGE, EGHAM – UPDATE FOLLOWING OUTCOME OF CVA

By resolution of the Committee, the press and public were excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this matter under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the discussion would be likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information of the description specified in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered a report on the outcome of a Company Voluntary Arrangement (CVA) that Travelodge Hotels Ltd had chosen to implement. The Travelodge Hotel in Egham was a tenant of the Council that paid rent to the Council as landlord. As a result of the negative impact of Covid-19 on Travelodge's revenue income, Travelodge Hotels Ltd had obtained a CVA and the Committee noted the effect of the CVA on this particular tenancy.

The Committee considered the various options available to it as the landlord which arose from the CVA and which were set out in the report. Having considered those options, the Committee agreed that the lease should remain with Travelodge, that Option 1 as set out in the Second Part II addendum to the agenda be adopted and that any necessary legal agreement or agreements be entered into to bring this into effect.

**RESOLVED that -**

- i) **Option 1 as set out in the Second Part II addendum to the agenda be adopted and the Council enters into any necessary legal agreement or agreements with Travelodge Group to reflect this; and**

- ii) **the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be delegated the necessary authority to approve any legal agreements to reflect resolution i) above.**

(The meeting ended at 8.58 p.m.)

Chairman