

Runnymede Borough CouncilCORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE25 November 2021 at 7.30 p.m.

Members of the Committee present: Councillors N Prescott (Chairman), T Gracey (Vice-Chairman), D Cotty, M Cressey, L Gillham, J Gracey, M Heath, C Howorth, J Hulley, M Maddox, I Mullens and D Whyte.

Members of the Committee absent: None

313 Fire Precautions

The Chairman read out the Fire Precautions.

314 Notification Of Changes To Committee Membership

The Groups mentioned below had notified the Chief Executive of their wish that the changes listed below be made to the membership of the Committee. The changes were for a fixed period ending on the day after the meeting and thereafter the Councillors removed would be reappointed.

Group	Remove From Membership	Appoint Instead
Conservative	Councillor M Willingale	Councillor J Hulley
Runnymede Independent Residents'	Councillor A Alderson	Councillor I Mullens

The Chief Executive had given effect to these requests in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

315 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 9 September 2021 and 23 September 2021 were confirmed and signed as correct records.

316 Apologies for Absence

None received.

317 Declaration Of Interest

Councillor Maddox declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in respect of the item on the Committee's agenda on Further Loan Agreement For RBC Investments (Surrey) Ltd which arose from his appointment as a Director of RBC Investments (Surrey) Ltd. Councillor Maddox left the room for the consideration of this item and for the voting on this item.

318 2019/20 Statement of Accounts

The Committee considered a report highlighting the production of the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019/20 and agreed that they be approved by the Leader of the Council. The Committee noted the reasons for the delay in the completion of the audit of the accounts for 2019/20 by BDO. The need for remote working by BDO as a result of the Covid pandemic was a major factor in the delay. As the 2019/20 audit had had to be undertaken remotely, severe time pressures had been experienced by Finance officers to

deliver and explain transactions when normally an auditor would be present in the office to ask questions and obtain information. Runnymede Finance officers had managed to publish the draft accounts for 2019/20 before the Government deadline but meeting the tight timescales set by the Government was only possible due to the goodwill and dedication of the highly experienced members of Runnymede Finance staff who had undertaken substantial amounts of additional hours to complete the job. The Committee expressed its thanks to the Runnymede Finance staff who had worked the additional hours.

Resolved that –

the Statement of Accounts for the financial year 2019/20 be approved and the Chairman of the Corporate Management Committee signs the Statement of Accounts.

319 Budget Monitoring Report – April 2021 To September 2021

The Committee noted a report setting out the latest financial projections for the 2021/22 financial year for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme as at 30 September 2021.

Income was less than planned because of the effects of the Covid pandemic. Parking income was particularly low with more people working from home and with some businesses struggling or having closed. In the 2020/21 financial year the Council had invoiced £29.1m in rent to various businesses and ended the year with arrears of only £1.3m (having previously written off £0.7m during the year). This fell far short of the £4m provision for bad debts predicted at the start of 2021 as businesses struggled with the third national lockdown. Despite this achievement, there was still a need to be wary in regard to the long term ramifications for Covid on the business sector.

The Committee noted a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Financial Monitoring Statement and changes in the HRA Revenue Account Working Balance as at 30 September 2021. Progress towards the General Fund savings target was noted. Assuming that the predictions for the forecast outturn in the General Fund Financial Monitoring Statement materialised at year end, the General Fund working balance would be reduced by £2.164m at 31 March 2021.

320 Review and Replacement Of Runnymede's Council Tax Discount Scheme For Empty Properties

This report was withdrawn under Standing Order 27.7. A revised report would be submitted to the Corporate Management Committee meeting on 16 December 2021.

321 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Partial Review Of Charging Schedule

During 2020 officers had prepared a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule which set out proposed charges for residential, office and student accommodation development coming forward in the Borough. Following recommendations by the CIL Examiner, the CIL Charging Schedule had been adopted by Council on 9 February 2021 without the student accommodation charge. Council had resolved at that meeting that a partial review of the CIL Charging Schedule be initiated and the Committee considered a report on the supplementary revenue estimate that would be needed if the partial review was undertaken.

The Committee noted the supplementary revenue estimate in the sum of £22,000 for the consultancy support that would be required for a partial review together with the risks involved. The Committee agreed that it would be appropriate to defer a decision on whether to approve this supplementary revenue estimate until the Government's plans to reform CIL and Section 106 were published. Under the Government's proposals to reform

the Planning system, the current Section 106 and CIL system was to be replaced by a mandatory all-encompassing Infrastructure Levy (IL). The proposed IL would be calculated on a national formula but based on local values. The proposed reforms had been due to be published in the summer of 2021 but had been delayed. However, in response to questions at a House of Lords Built Environment Committee on 2 November 2021, the Housing Minister, Christopher Pincher, had reiterated that the Government were looking at a better system than Section 106 and CIL and appeared to suggest that proposals would be set out in the near future. If a new national system were introduced, any work undertaken and costs incurred on a partial CIL review in Runnymede would be abortive.

Resolved that –

a decision on whether to approve a supplementary revenue estimate for an additional £22,000 to be provided to the Planning Policy budget to enable a partial review of CIL to be undertaken be deferred until the Government's plans to reform CIL and Section 106 are published.

322 Reference From Environment And Sustainability Committee – LGV Drivers – Retention And Succession Planning – Waste Management Operations

The Committee considered a reference from the Environment and Sustainability Committee which at its meeting on 17 November 2021 had recommended the approval of a supplementary revenue estimate for an increase to the refuse and recycling budget for a retention/market supplement payment for the DSO's existing 15 LGV drivers, the training and enhanced payment for five relief drivers and additional funding to increase the salary budget of the waste and street scene services for the appointment of an Operations Manager. This increases for the LGV drivers would address national issues which existed in respect of the recruitment and retention of LGV drivers. The appointment of an Operations Manager for the Council's Waste Management Team would further increase work expanding the promotion and improvement of recycling and waste collections across the Borough as well as improving recycling and contamination performance.

When comparing Runnymede's LGV drivers with the private sector LGV and HGV drivers, it was noted that Council drivers would tend to work for shorter hours and have better terms and conditions than the private sector. Drivers in the private sector might be paid more but would tend to have to work for longer and for more unsocial hours. Driver costs in the private sector would be passed on to the customer whereas Council driver costs would be passed to local residents via the Council tax. The Committee fully supported the increase in the budget bearing in mind the rates of pay which were being offered by other local authorities. It was noted that the changes would come into effect from 1 April 2022 and that training would begin in January 2022.

Resolved that –

a supplementary revenue estimate be approved in the sum of £131,500.68 for the additional funding of £57,825 per annum for the existing 15 LGV refuse drivers as a retention/market payment supplement, £11,470 per annum for the training of existing staff to cover the role of relief drivers, £53,205.68 for the increase in salaries once relief drivers are qualified, an increase for five members of staff from a Grade 4 Loader to a Grade 8 LGV Refuse Driver and £9,000 for the increase in the salary budget for the appointment of an Operations Manager for the waste and street scene budget.

323 Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24

Housing officers had made a successful bid for £225,000 capital grant funding towards purchase and repair for three properties to be used for rough sleepers from the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24. Permission was sought to purchase three

properties utilising this grant, commuted sums held for affordable housing in lieu of on-site provision accrued during the Planning process and funding secured from Surrey County Council. A capital budget of £700,000 was required to cover the purchase price of the three properties, fees and any adaptations required. The anticipated on going revenue costs of the scheme were noted. There would be an annual revenue surplus for the General Fund which barring exceptional circumstances could be approximately £15,000.

There would be no call on the Council's own capital funds to facilitate these purchases. Although the capital funding of £700,000 was in place, the Council's Financial Regulations stated that any additions to the Capital Programme must be approved by Committee and a capital estimate sought regardless of the funding mechanisms. The amount of the capital estimate exceeded the sum which the Committee could approve normally so that normally this funding would be a recommendation to Full Council. However, officers were hoping to complete on one of the three properties before the Full Council meeting on 9 December 2021. Therefore, as an urgent decision was required as it was anticipated that the completion of one of the properties would take place before 9 December 2021, the Committee approved the purchase of the properties and the supplementary capital estimate required to meet the cost of the three properties.

Resolved that –

- i) the purchase of three properties under the Homes England Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme 2021-24 be approved to be held in the General Fund; and**
- ii) in view of the anticipated completion of one of the three properties before the next meeting of Full Council, in accordance with paragraph 1.3 of Committee Responsibilities and the Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution, a supplementary capital estimate of £700,000 to meet the cost of the three properties be approved to be funded from external grants and commuted sums.**

324 Strode's Foundation – Appointment Of Replacement Trustee

The Committee considered nominations received from Councillor Balkan and Councillor Williams to replace Mrs Eiry Price as a Trustee on Strode's Foundation for a 4 year term. This item had been on the agenda for the meeting of the Committee on 14 October 2021 which had been cancelled and accordingly was submitted to this meeting for decision. The Committee made the appointment in accordance with Standing Order 39.6.

Resolved that –

Councillor A Balkan be appointed to replace Mrs Eiry Price as a Trustee on Strode's Foundation for a 4 year term.

(Councillor S Williams was also nominated for this appointment. The nominations of Councillors Balkan and Williams were put to the vote and Councillor Balkan received the greater number of votes and was duly appointed).

325 Chertsey Combined Charity – Appointment Of Replacement Trustee

The Committee considered a replacement for Mrs J. Norman who had resigned as a Trustee on the Chertsey Combined Charity. It was noted that one of the Charity's Trustees, Councillor Dolsie Clarke, had nominated Mr Neill Rubidge for this appointment. A nomination form for this appointment had also been received from Mr Adrian Elston. However, as no Members of the Committee proposed or seconded Mr Elston as a candidate for this appointment, the Committee agreed to appoint Mr Neill Rubidge as a replacement Trustee.

Resolved that –

Mr Neill Rubidge be appointed to replace Mrs J Norman as a Trustee on the Chertsey Combined Charity.

326 **Egham United Charity – Appointment Of Replacement Trustee**

Officers had received notification from Egham United Charity that one of their current Trustees wished to resign and the Chairman of the Trustees had asked the Council to approve Mr Hemang Shah as replacement Trustee for the unexpired term of office until 2023. This item had been on the agenda for the meeting of the Committee on 14 October 2021 which had been cancelled and accordingly was submitted to this meeting for decision.

The Committee noted that the Egham United Charity had adopted a proactive approach to developing people as future Trustees and had created a group of people as Associate Trustees. When a vacancy for a Representative Trustee arose, the charity invited the Council to appoint a person who was currently an Associate Trustee as a Representative Trustee which meant that someone who was familiar with and committed to the organisation could take on the role. Accordingly the Committee agreed to appoint Mr Hemang Shah as the replacement Trustee.

Resolved that –

Mr Hemang Shah be appointed as the replacement Trustee on the Egham United Charity.

327 **Calendar Of Meetings 2022 - 2023**

The Committee considered the proposed Calendar of meetings for the next Municipal Year which would run from May 2022-May 2023. This item had been on the agenda for the meeting of the Committee on 14 October 2021 which had been cancelled and accordingly was submitted to this meeting of the Committee for it to make a recommendation.

The schedule of meetings largely followed the usual well established pattern. The opportunity had been taken to try and avoid meetings of Committees, other than Planning Committee, during school holiday periods and to try and avoid meetings at key football World Cup dates and during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. In view of the small amount of business for the two meetings of Corporate Management Committee in September this year, only one Corporate Management Committee meeting was scheduled for September 2022 which would meet on 22 September 2022.

The proposed Calendar and diary schedule of the Committee dates, as reported, were recommended to Full Council for approval. 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.

Recommend to Full Council on 9 December 2021 that –

the calendar of meetings for May 2022 – May 2023 be approved.

328 **Fees and Charges**

The Committee considered the proposed fees and charges under its remit for the next financial year, which included garage rents, local land charges and Council Tax and business rates court costs. The Committee approved the proposed fees and charges as set in Appendix 'J' to the agenda including the Civic Centre accommodation charges for out of

hours reception cover but agreed that there would be no increase to any of the other Civic Centre accommodation charges.

Resolved that -

the fees and charges as set out in Appendix 'J' to the agenda be approved to be effective from the dates within the Appendix or as soon as practical thereafter with the exception of no increase in the Civic Centre accommodation charges for the Council Chamber, the Committee Room, the Foyer, the Meeting Rooms and the Members' Room.

329 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2021/22

The Committee noted a report on the Council's treasury activity for the first six months of the 2021/22 financial year.

It was noted that in addition to the normal money markets, the Council also invested in its own companies by way of loans provided to them for the purchase of assets from the Council that the Council could not hold itself and via working capital loans. All such Loan Agreements had been approved by Full Council at rates set in accordance with European Commission competition rules. The annual interest on these loans was £1,484,266.

Total investments as at 30 September 2021 were £71,454,000 and total borrowings as at 30 September 2021 were £637,292. During the financial year to date, the Council had operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

330 Urgent Action – Standing Order 42

The Committee noted proformas 984 and 986 detailing action taken after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

331 Project Portfolio Reporting – To End of October 2021

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.

As a result of the cancellation of the Committee meeting on 14 October 2021, the 2021/22 quarter 2 report on the project portfolio had not been considered by the Committee. As the quarter 2 report was now out of date, the Committee noted an update on the Project movements in respect of the projects reported in October 2021 as at Risk, as Live or Pipeline.

The Committee also noted a Project Portfolio Dashboard which provided an overview of the current portfolio including the delivery timelines as of the end of October 2021. The risks and issues for the Schools Transport Initiative and the Magna Square Development projects were being monitored closely by the project teams for these projects. The grounds maintenance options appraisal project had been progressed as a result of an Urgent Action approval following the cancellation of the 14 October 2021 meeting. The Kings Lane Bike Track project had been rebaselined and its finish date was now on schedule and the hybrid mail implementation project had been delivered.

Resolved that –

- i) the updates to Projects reported in October 2021 as at Risk be noted; and;**
- ii) the updates to Projects reported in October 2021 as Live or Pipeline be noted.**

332 Essential User Car Allowance

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 4 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

As part of a response to the Council's financial situation, the Committee considered a report proposing to remove the Essential User Car Allowance lump sum for staff with the intention of making savings and dealing with an arrangement that needed to be revisited and updated. This item had been on the agenda for the meeting of the Committee on 14 October 2021 which had been cancelled and was accordingly submitted to this meeting of the Committee for decision.

The Essential User Car Allowance lump sum was given to those members of staff who needed to use their car frequently for work purposes and whose annual mileage was in the region of 1,000 miles per annum. Members of staff who used their cars less frequently for Council business could claim Casual User mileage. Essential Users received a lump sum Allowance to take into account the greater wear and tear on their car from being a very frequent user in addition to receiving a mileage rate. Casual Users only received a mileage rate.

As a number of staff in receipt of the Essential User Car Allowance were in practice not meeting the mileage criteria, it was agreed that the Allowance should be removed subject to the outcome of a consultation exercise with UNISON and staff. Many local authorities had already removed an Essential User Car Allowance. More staff were working from home as a result of the pandemic and the Council would be seeking to minimise the individual use of non – electric vehicles where possible as part of the green agenda.

The approach to be taken for the removal of the Allowance recommended by the Council's officer Senior Leadership Team (SLT) was to give one year's notice of the ending of the Allowance or offer a buy out of one year's essential user lump sum to all those in receipt of the Essential User lump sum. As for a number of staff the Allowance was accepted part of their remuneration, it was considered that it was appropriate for twelve months' notice of the withdrawal of the Allowance to be given to staff if this option were to be taken.

The Committee concurred with the approach recommended by the SLT and agreed that officers proceed as set out in resolutions i) to v) below. As over time some managers had misused the Essential User Car Allowance Scheme as a way to enhance the salary package instead of using market supplements, it was noted that it might be necessary in some cases to check and amend some market salaries.

Employees who were categorised as Essential Users had free parking spaces in the undercroft car park at the Civic Centre or 3 days free parking in the multi-storey car park in Garfield Road, Addlestone. Those who were classed as Casual Users had 2 days free parking in the multi-storey car park and paid on the other days. It had been suggested that all staff receive 5 days free parking in the multi-storey car park in Garfield Road, Addlestone instead of 3 days for Essential Users and 2 days for Casual Users. Finance and Facilities Management had confirmed that there would be no additional cost to giving all staff 5 days free parking in that car park.

Resolved that –

- i) the Essential User Car Allowance be removed subject to the outcome of a consultation exercise;**
- ii) twelve months' notice of the removal of the Essential User Car allowance be given to all staff in receipt of the Allowance;**
- iii) UNISON and staff affected be consulted on the proposal;**
- iv) in the event that responses to the consultation indicate that the majority of staff would prefer to receive a lump sum payment then officers be granted delegated authority to implement that approach;**
- v) officers be granted delegated authority to implement the removal of the Essential User Car Allowance following the conclusion of the consultation process unless the responses to the consultation raise matters which need to be reported to the Committee and if so, officers will report to the Committee for their views; and**
- vi) it be noted that Finance and Facilities Management have confirmed that there will be no additional cost to giving all staff 5 days free parking in the Garfield Road multi-storey car park.**

333 Human Resources Mini Review

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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered a report reviewing the Council's Human Resources (HR) service to create a structure that had sufficient capacity for HR to support the organisation in the most effective way in the future. HR's staffing establishment was significantly below the ratios of HR staff to size of workforce in other Surrey districts. The range of tasks carried out by HR was noted. The limited number of HR staff resulted in an overstretched team and delays. Unless further investment was made in HR it would be difficult to retain the existing staff.

The Committee noted the current structure of HR and the proposed revised structure and the costs of the changes. The proposed structure created additional professional capacity to support the substantial ongoing level of casework and the level of organisational change which was due to happen over the next few years. The Committee agreed that the proposed revised structure would provide a more resilient, flexible team with additional capacity at an economic cost and approved the proposed structure in principle subject to consultations with UNISON and the staff affected.

Resolved that –

the proposed structure be approved in principle subject to consultations with UNISON and the staff affected.

334 Further Loan Agreement For RBC Investments (Surrey) Ltd

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 containing a proposal that the Council enter into an agreement to provide a further loan to RBC Investments (Surrey) Ltd (RBCI). RBCI was a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) that had been set up to acquire and manage residential investment property for letting in the private rented sector. RBCI provided funding to the Council's other two SPVs, RBC Services (Addlestone One) Limited and RBC Heat Company Limited, if they required it. The Corporate Management Committee exercised the function of shareholder of RBCI.

The Magna Square (formerly known as Egham Gateway) development report presented to the Committee in February 2020 set out the agreement for RBCI to take on private residential units in the new development. This was required in order for the residential units to be let as Private Rented Sector units with Assured Shorthold Tenancies. In order to achieve this, a new loan agreement was required to enable the company to buy the units from the Council.

The valuations and anticipated market rents agreed by the Committee were currently being reviewed to ensure that the original assumptions were still viable for RBCI to take on the loan. Should there be a need to review any of these details a further report would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. However, it was anticipated that the loan amount set out in the report should be sufficient.

The method of calculation of the loan rate as set out in section 2 of the report and the Legal Implications of the loan were noted by the Committee. The Committee agreed that the rate of interest set out in the report was appropriate. The Committee noted the approximate amount of interest per annum which would be generated for the General Fund once all the units had been transferred across and recommended to Full Council the execution of the loan facility agreement.

Recommend to Full Council on 9 December 2021 that –

the execution of a loan facility agreement between the Council and RBC Investments (Surrey) Ltd be approved for the purchase of residential units in the Magna Square development at up to the sum reported to be repaid over a time period as reported.

335 Options For Leisure Provision In Runnymede

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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee considered a report setting out options for future leisure provision in Runnymede. The options were set out in sections 3 and 4 of the report. The Committee noted the resource, legal, equality and environmental/sustainability/biodiversity implications of the options. The Committee also noted the views of the Council's independent consultant. Having considered this information, the Committee resolved as set out below.

Resolved that –

- i) Option 2 as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report be pursued;**

- ii) **the Chief Executive reports back to the next meeting of the Committee on the outcome of negotiations to achieve option 2 and the detailed terms of any such arrangements together with a project plan; and**
- iii) **the Chief Executive reports back to the next meeting of the Committee on the options set out in paragraph 4.2 of the report.**

336 **Urgent Action – Standing Order 42**

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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

The Committee noted proformas 988 and 989 detailing action taken after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. Proforma 988 had also been approved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Housing Committee and this Urgent Action would also be reported to the Housing Committee meeting on 12 January 2022.

(The meeting ended at 9.04.p.m.)

Chairman