

Runnymede Borough CouncilCorporate Management CommitteeThursday, 23 February 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors T Gracey (Chairman), C Howorth (Vice-Chair), M Cressey, L Gillham, J Gracey, N King, R King, I Mullens, N Prescott (In place of M Heath), D Whyte, M Willingale and J Wilson (In place of M Nuti).

525 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

526 **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

527 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

528 **Great Big Green Week**

The proposal built on the events that were held for the previous Great Big Green Week. It was hoped that the climate change consultation would be launched to coincide with the borough's planned events.

The Committee supported the approach proposed by officers and hoped that as many community groups as possible could be involved.

It was **resolved** that:

1. Events for this year's Great Big Green Week be held in accordance with option 4, as outlined in the officer's report.
2. An update report, on levels of participation, be received by the Corporate Management Committee after this year's Great Big Green Week events.

529 **Asset and Regeneration Strategy**

The draft strategy was an important document, which sought to ensure that the Council had an asset base that was fit for purpose. It also sought to formalise the Corporate Management Committee's role as the corporate landlord. The strategy document and performance against the key performance indicators within would be kept under regular review, as it was important to ensure that the Council's portfolio of properties continued to meet the Council's needs in what was a challenging and changeable economic climate.

The draft strategy was discussed by the Committee.

Suggested additions, such as referencing significant employers like St Peter's Hospital, and the proposed housing development at Longcross, were made. A number of other minor amendments were noted by officers.

There was discussion about the proposed minimum energy efficiency rating. It was planned for this to align with the higher rating expected of the borough's housing stock

when the next iteration of the strategy was developed in 2028.

The value of a number of properties had decreased since they were last reviewed. The Committee was assured that this was normal for assets that had long term tenancies nearing their end points. Efforts were being made to secure new tenancy agreements at the best possible value for the Council.

The levels of delegation that were being sought as part of the table in the addendum to the report were discussed. Whilst the Committee was content with most of the proposed delegations that were sought, it was considered that the current officer level delegation for rental values below £100k (detailed in row 1 of the table in the addendum) was appropriate and that member oversight of leases above this value should remain. It was further felt that a suitable mechanism, in the form of Standing Order 42, already facilitated speedy decision making where it was required. It was reported that the Constitution Working Group had reviewed the request for greater delegation and that those present at the working group held similar views to those expressed by members of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the mechanism for upward only rent reviews. There was concern about how this might affect organisations that added substantial value to Runnymede's communities. It was noted that whilst this mechanism needed to remain in the strategy, there were other measures available to safeguard such organisations. These measures included grant aid and a provision, within defined limits, as set out in Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The complexity of the health and safety policy elements of the strategy were reviewed. These sections were necessarily detailed, in order to safeguard the Council and its interests. These parts of the strategy would be kept under review.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the proposed motion be amended to read:

“The Asset Management Strategy and associated policies attached at appendix A be recommended to the Council for adoption, subject to:

1. The amount in row 1 of appendix 8 (grant or renewal of a lease by officers) being retained at £100k.
2. The various minor amendments discussed during the debate being incorporated into the strategy.”

It was **resolved** that the amended substantive motion be agreed.

### 530 **Annual Pay Policy Statement - 2023/24**

The Pay Policy Statement was a statutory document that had to be published on an annual basis.

The increase in the difference between the lowest and highest paid, when compared to the previous year, was noted. The Corporate Head of Human Resources agreed to review the reasons for this and report back to the Human Resources Member Working Party.

It was **resolved** that the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 be recommended for approval by the Council on 2 March 2023.

### 531 **Preliminary Consideration of Mayoral Selection**

It was **resolved** that the Council, at its meeting on 2 March 2023, be recommended to propose Councillor Shannon Saise-Marshall as Mayor for the 2023/24 municipal year.

## 532 **Standing Order 42 - Urgent Action**

The urgent decisions, taken in accordance with Standing Order 42, were noted.

## 533 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

By resolution of the Committee, for the reasons set out in the agenda, the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting during the consideration of the remaining matters 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 as set out in Schedule 12A to Part 1 of the Act.

## 534 **Pay issues**

A proposal to adjust the lowest pay scales, in response to the increase in the National Living Wage was presented to the Committee. This would result in a considerable improvement for some staff salaries. Consideration had been given to the arrangements around job families, to ensure that staff were paid equitably.

An update on discussions with Unison around the annual pay award was provided. The discussions had been constructive, with thanks extended to Union's branch and regional officers.

It was **resolved** that:

1. The proposed re-modelling of the lower end of the pay structure as detailed in appendix 2, be agreed, with an implementation date of 1 April 2023.
2. A 3% cost-of-living increase for all staff be approved, for implementation from 1 July 2023.
3. A non-consolidated lump sum of £1,400 (pro-rata for part-time staff) be paid to staff on 1 April 2023.

## 535 **Local Authority Housing Fund**

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had allocated a sum of money to Runnymede for the purchase of properties to house eight Ukrainian and Afghan families. These properties, when vacated by these families, would then become part of the borough's housing stock. Other neighbouring local authorities had agreed to similar arrangements with the Department.

The Committee lauded the support that Runnymede had provided to Ukrainian and Afghan families, and noted the contributions that many had already made to their communities.

It was **resolved** that:

1. Runnymede sign-up to the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme.
2. The suggested delivery route, as outlined in the report, be agreed.
3. Due to the unavailability of 1-4-1 receipts, additional use of the HRA working balance be approved, in accordance with the arrangements set out in the report.
4. Authority be delegated to the Corporate Head of Housing, in consultation with the Chairman of the Corporate Management Committee, to determine rent levels related to properties purchased via this scheme.

It was **resolved** that the following recommendation be made to the Council on 2 March 2023:

That the budget, as set out in the report, to purchase 8 properties to fulfil the requirements

of the Local Authority Housing Fund, be agreed.

536 **Q3 Project Portfolio progress update**

The Committee noted the update.

537 **Proposed Letting at Addlestone One**

It was **resolved** that:

1. The costs (to be taken from the Addlestone One capital budget), as outlined in the officer's report, be agreed.
2. The Chief Executive Officer (or Assistant Chief Executive in his absence), be delegated authority to agree the letting of the unit in consultation with the Corporate Head of Law and Governance, the Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration, and the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate Management Committee, in accordance with the officer's report.

538 **Letting - Magna Square**

It was **resolved** that:

1. A Lease be granted, in accordance with the terms outlined in the officer's report.
2. The Chief Executive Officer (or Assistant Chief Executive in his absence), be delegated authority to agree necessary adaptations in consultation with the Corporate Head of Law and Governance, the Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration, and the Chair and Vice Chair of Corporate Management Committee, in accordance with the officer's report.

539 **Procurement of a consultant to support the recruitment of a Chief Executive**

It was **resolved** that:

1. The budget for consultancy support to assist in the sourcing of a new Chief Executive, as outlined in the officer's report, be agreed.
2. The virement of the unused proportion of the Chief Executive's 2022/23 provision for community initiatives budget, to contribute towards the cost detailed in 1) above, be agreed.
3. Any unspent proportion of the above budget for consultancy support, as at 31 March 2023, be carried forward into the 2023/24 financial year to pay for the consultant's service.
4. The recommended consultant be appointed, in accordance with the officer's report.

(The meeting ended at 9.30 pm.)

Chairman