

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

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

643 Minutes

The minutes of the Corporate Management Committee held on 23 February 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

The minutes of the Council Tax Setting Committee held on 23 February 2023 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

644 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

645 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

646 Climate Change Study Stage 1 – Organisational Boundary and Scope Allocation

The preferred option, as set out in the report, was presented to the Committee. The preferred option offered a pragmatic approach and would not prevent the Council undertaking actions with regard to assets not specified in the appendix to the report. The second stage of this work was expected to begin during the summer, with the intention to launch the associated questionnaire around the same time as the 'Great Big Green Week'.

It was **resolved** that the Council's approach to defining its organisational boundary, for the purpose of setting its carbon baseline and emissions reporting for its own estate and operations, be that presented in option 2 of the officer's report.

647 Climate Change Update

The report had been considered by the Environment and Sustainability Committee, with a summary of the Committee's discussions provided with the agenda papers. The climate change response activities document provided an overview of activities that had had both direct and indirect impacts on climate change. The format of climate change related reporting was currently being reviewed.

The update was noted.

648 Procurement Strategy and related policies

An overview of the changes that had been made to the suite of documents was provided to the Committee. New documentation aimed to provide prospective suppliers with useful information about the Council's procurement processes. The importance of good practice and minimising instances of noncompliance was emphasised to the Committee.

It was noted that further changes were expected in 2024 as a result of the Procurement Bill that was currently making its way through Parliament. The changes that were the subject of this report therefore sought to put the Council in a favourable position for adopting further changes later on.

The Committee explored the sections relating to social value and sustainable procurement.

There was discussion about the level of resource available in the procurement team. The Committee was keen to ensure that staff were not overstretched by the quantity of work likely to arise from this report. The Head of Procurement, once appointed, would be tasked with monitoring workloads.

Recent discussions on sharing services with a neighbouring authority had been paused due to difficulties in reaching an agreement on the division of a shared team's resources between the participating authorities. Surrey districts and boroughs had however recently compiled a shared contract register with a view to sharing procurement activities on individual projects. Opportunities to share services would however continue to be explored as and when appropriate.

It was **resolved** that the Procurement Strategy and associated policies be recommended to Council for adoption.

649 **Establishment of an Appointments Sub-Committee - Chief Executive**

The process for recruiting a new Chief Executive had commenced, following the current Chief Executive's stated intention to retire by the end of July 2023. A new, politically balanced Sub-Committee, was therefore required to compile a longlist of candidates to facilitate subsequent stages of the recruitment process.

The Committee debated whether it was necessary or appropriate to begin the recruitment process before the election. Some members felt that the post should be filled without any unnecessary delay, due to the importance of the Chief Executive role. It was also felt that a smooth transition period between the outgoing and incoming Chief Executives was dependent on the recruitment process proceeding as swiftly as possible. Other members felt that forging ahead with the recruitment process before the election was inappropriate, again due to the importance of the Chief Executive role, and the close proximity of the local government election on 4 May 2023 which could affect the political balance of the Council.

The recruitment timetable was reviewed. It was noted that only the longlisting meeting, designed to test the quality of the applications received, was proposed to take place before the election. Longlisted candidates would then be interviewed and tested by the executive consultant, who would present their findings after the election.

A new, standing Appointments Sub-Committee, was proposed for implementation at the Annual Council on 17 May 2023. This standing Sub-Committee would assume responsibility for the recruitment process after the longlisting stage had concluded.

Member feedback on the recent Assistant Chief Executive recruitment process, such as the localness of the executive consultant, had been factored into the Chief Executive recruitment process.

Detailed due diligence would be carried out on the candidate who was recommended for appointment.

It was proposed (by Councillor R. King) and seconded (by Councillor D. Whyte) that the following dates on the recruitment timetable be moved as follows:

1. The longlisting meeting of the Appointments Sub-Committee on 26 April 2023 be moved to 7 May 2023.
2. The longlisting interviews, to be conducted by Tile Hill and the technical assessor, be moved from w/c 1 May 2023 to w/c 14 May 2023.

A named vote on the proposed amendment was requested, with the voting as follows:

For the proposed amendment (4)

Councillors Gillham, R. King, Mullens and D. Whyte.

Against the proposed amendment (8)

Councillors T. Gracey, Howorth, Cressey, J. Gracey, Lewis, Balkan, Nuti, and Prescott.

Abstentions (0)

The amendment **FELL**.

There was further debate about the recruitment process. Concerns were raised about how the process should proceed in the event of a change in the Council's administration following the local election on 4 May 2023. Members were reminded that all officer posts were apolitical and should not be affected by an election. Candidate suitability needed to be tested against the job description and person specification for the role.

Concerns were raised about the report not explicitly stating that the recruitment process would cross two sets of constitutional arrangements across two municipal years. It was confirmed that the recruitment process being undertaken by separately constituted Sub-Committees did not put at risk the probity of the process.

Nominations for candidates to join the Appointments Sub-Committee were taken by a show of hands. Councillors Cressey, Gillham, J. Gracey, T. Gracey, Howorth, D. Whyte and Willingale all received votes from a majority of the Committee. Councillor R. King was also nominated, but his nomination did not gain votes from a majority of the Committee, and he was therefore was not put forward as a nominee.

It was proposed (by Councillor T. Gracey) and seconded (by Councillor Howorth) that section b) of the proposed motion be amended to read:

That the membership of the Appointments Sub-Committee be agreed as Councillors Cressey, Gillham, J. Gracey, T. Gracey, Howorth, D. Whyte and Willingale, in accordance with the proportionality calculations set out in paragraph 2.9, until such time that the Appointments Sub-Committee is superseded by the standing Appointments Sub-Committee (or other successor arrangement).

A named vote on the proposed amendment was requested, with the voting as follows:

For the proposed amendment (8)

Councillors T. Gracey, Howorth, Cressey, J. Gracey, Lewis, Balkan, Nuti, and Prescott.

Against the proposed amendment (4)

Councillors Gillham, R. King, Mullens and D. Whyte.

Abstentions (0)

The amendment was **CARRIED**.

A named vote on the proposed amended substantive motion was requested, with the voting as follows:

For the proposed amended substantive motion (8)

Councillors T. Gracey, Howorth, Cressey, J. Gracey, Lewis, Balkan, Nuti, and Prescott.

Against the proposed amended substantive motion (4)

Councillors Gillham, R. King, Mullens and D. Whyte.

Abstentions (0)

It was **resolved** that:

- a) An Appointments Sub-Committee be established in accordance with the proposed arrangements set out in this report.
- b) The membership of the Appointments Sub-Committee be agreed as Councillors Cressey, Gillham, J. Gracey, T. Gracey, Howorth, D. Whyte and Willingale, in accordance with the proportionality calculations set out in paragraph 2.9, until such time that the Appointments Sub-Committee is superseded by the standing Appointments Sub-Committee (or other successor arrangement).
- c) The Appointments Sub-Committee receive a report from Tile Hill, the Executive consultants nominated to assist with this appointment, on all applicants and agree a longlist;
- d) Following longlist interviews by a consultant from Tile Hill and an appropriate Technical Assessor, the Appointments Sub-Committee meet to agree a shortlist for interview by the Sub-committee;
- e) Candidates complete psychometric exercises and any other appropriate exercises ahead of the interviews with the Appointments Sub-Committee;
- f) The Appointments Sub-Committee conduct interviews of suitable candidates;
- g) The Appointments Sub-Committee make a recommendation to Full Council of the candidate they recommend should be offered the role prior to an offer being made to that candidate.

650 **River Thames Scheme: Runnymede Borough Council - division of roles and responsibilities**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting.

651 **Corporate Key Performance Indicators – proposed indicators and targets for 2023/24**

The Committee reviewed the proposed performance indicators (PI) and targets for 2023/24, noting that they had previously been considered by the Communication and Service Transformation Member Working Party. The proposed targets in PI H10 were corrected to “72”.

It was noted that proposed PIs needed to be aspirational, but also achievable. With this consideration in mind, various targets were discussed, with a view to ensuring that they

were appropriate.

Members raised queries relating to the following proposed PIs:

- ES1 and ES2 – The Committee requested further information about these targets and whether it was appropriate to retain 'negative' PIs.
- H3 – Members sought confirmation on whether the proposed PI related to the overall satisfaction of the repairs that had been carried out.
- H6 – Members asked for clarification on why this target remained static throughout the year.
- P1 – The Committee queried whether this target was appropriate, given that RBC consistently exceeded it.

It was **resolved** that:

- 1) The proposed 2023/24 Corporate Performance Indicators descriptions as shown in Appendix A be agreed, with the exception of ES1, ES2, H3, H6 and P1.
- 2) A further report on PIs ES1, ES2, H3, H6 and P1 be considered by the Corporate Management Committee on 20 April 2023.
- 3) The proposed 2023/24 quarterly/annual targets be agreed.

652 **Service Area Plan approval for the CEX Office, HR, Finance, Legal and Governance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services**

The Committee reviewed the corporate service area plans. Plans for other service areas had been considered by their respective committees. The Corporate Action Plan, which detailed 212 activities in total, was presented to the Committee. Work was taking place on developing a corporate reporting system to supplement the monitoring of progress against the Corporate Action Plan.

There was debate over the replacement of member IT. Concerns were raised about the sustainability considerations arising from replacing ageing devices that were currently still serviceable. The reasons for replacing devices at prescribed intervals were discussed. These included device and network security and the reliability of devices generally reducing as they aged. It was confirmed that hardware refreshes every four years was typical for businesses and other similar organisations. The older devices that were being replaced were planned for use in resident engagement panels, where they were more likely to be damaged.

It was requested that the member IT survey and device refresh be considered by the Communication and Service Transformation Member Working Party, with a subsequent report back to the Corporate Management Committee if required.

It was **resolved** that the following be agreed:

- 1) The Service Area Plans for Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, Legal and Governance, HR, and the CEX Office for delivery during 2023/24.
- 2) The collective Corporate Action Plan for delivery in 2023/24, collated from planned activity across all service area plans.

653 **Annual Review of the Constitution 2023**

The Committee reviewed the proposed changes to the Constitution, following their review by the Constitution Member Working Party. The way in which the changes were presented had changed from previous years, with the aim of providing greater clarity to members. It was noted that the Corporate Management Committee agenda documents would not be reproduced for Council.

There was discussion about the proposed process for alternative budgets. Concerns were raised about the speed at which opposition groups were expected to prepare their budget proposals. It was however stated that the administration's proposed budget would ordinarily be available approximately one week before the relevant Corporate Management Committee and that opposition groups would not be asked for their proposals until nearer the budget setting Council meeting. The moveable nature of meetings meant that it was not possible to offer greater flexibility in the process.

The proposed five day expectation for staff to respond to member enquiries, having been debated by the Member Working Party, could be revisited in due course, should it be necessary.

It was **resolved** that the following recommendations be made to the Council on 27 April 2023.

- 1) That the updates to the Constitution be adopted at the beginning of the 2023/24 municipal year i.e. from 18 May 2023 (subject to the deletion of a repetitious entry on page 168 of the agenda pack).
- 2) That Surrey County Council's withdrawal from The Runnymede Joint Committee be noted.
- 3) That Runnymede Borough Council withdraws from the Runnymede Joint Committee with immediate effect, thus bringing about the Joint Committee's dissolution.
- 4) That the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be delegated authority to make any unforeseen and necessary changes to the Constitution, arising from the dissolution of the Runnymede Joint Committee, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

654 **Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24**

The proposed scheme had been drafted in accordance with the previously adopted recommendations of the independent remuneration panel (i.e. uplifts in accordance with the annual staff pay award).

It was **resolved** that the following recommendations be put to the Council on 27 April 2023:

1. The 2022/23 Members' Allowances Scheme be withdrawn with an end date of 16 May 2023 inclusive.
2. An updated Members' Allowances Scheme (as attached at appendix 1 of the officer's report), to incorporate a 3% uplift with the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances, be agreed with an implementation date of 17 May 2023 inclusive

655 **Motion from Council**

The draft letter was reviewed by the Committee.

It was **resolved** that the draft letter be agreed, subject to:

- 1) The reference to “villages across the borough” being amended to “Englefield Green”.
- 2) An inclusion referencing compensation for Runnymede’s residents being made, in accordance with the motion agreed by the Council.

656 **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.

657 **Review of Law and Governance Restructure**

This report followed an earlier Corporate Management Committee report on restructuring the Legal Services team. Efforts to recruit into the new team structure had not been successful, which dictated the need to revisit how Legal Services provided support to services across the Council. The difficulties in attracting individuals to professional posts across the Council were noted.

It was **resolved** that:

- 1) Recruitment to the vacant posts of Senior Solicitor (Contracts) and Principal Solicitor (Contracts) be suspended until 31 March 2024.
- 2) A one-off budget, for the sum set out in the officer’s report, to settle external legal costs associated for contract and procurement work in the financial year 2023-24, be agreed.
- 3) The change of job title from Legal Officer (Property) to Senior Solicitor (Property) be agreed.
- 4) A £5,000 annual market supplement (to be reviewed in April 2025) be applied to the newly titled Senior Solicitor (Property) role.
- 5) The current annual market supplement for the vacant Principal Solicitor (Property) be continued until April 2025.

658 **Procurement of Internal Audit Services - Update**

It had not been possible to progress the procurement of internal audit services, as previously proposed. This had however afforded an opportunity to explore services offered by a range of suppliers that had subsequently been identified. The existing internal auditor had provided a high quality service and an inflationary increase in the cost of retaining this arrangement was considered reasonable.

It was **resolved** that:

- 1) A waiver under the Council’s Contract Standing Orders, to allow a one-year extension of the existing Internal Audit contract with TIAA Ltd, be agreed.
- 2) A report on the preferred route to secure internal audit services, on completion of due diligence activities, be brought back to the Corporate Management Committee

in due course.

- 3) A supplementary estimate, for the amount stated in the officer's report, to reflect the inflationary uplift in the contract price for 2023/24, be agreed.

659 **Chertsey Museum lift, Civic Centre emergency lighting and fire doors**

The Committee discussed the reasons for the overspends, the majority of which had occurred within the last two financial quarters. There were ongoing negotiations with the Council's insurer's loss adjuster around some of the works that had taken place. Other issues included litigation with a tenant and various urgent compliance matters.

There were discussions about the robustness and longevity of the Civic Centre roof. The committee was disappointed to learn that the roof's lifespan was typical of such structures. Lessons learned in the construction of the Civic Centre would be applied to future projects.

It was **resolved** to:

1. Proceed with the replacement of the lift at Chertsey Museum, in accordance with the costs set out in the officer's report, to be taken from the 2022/23 provision for Asset Management budget, held in the Capital Programme.
2. Note the additional costs of replacement emergency lighting at the Civic Centre, to be met from the 2022/23 provision for Asset Management budget, held in the Capital Programme.
3. Note the overspend of the planned preventative reactive maintenance budget, in accordance with the costs set out in the officer's report, for the year ending 2022/2023.

660 **Future use of surplus properties**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting.

661 **Urgent business**

661a **Core Grants Proposals**

The Chairman was of the opinion that this item was urgent due to the need to provide financial certainty to the organisations concerned, and the impending commencement of the financial year in which the awards were to be made.

The discussions of the Community Services Committee were noted. The decision was within the purview of the Corporate Management Committee, and therefore a referral to the Council was not necessary.

It was **resolved** that the following core grants be awarded:

- 1) £103,700 + 10% for a period of three years to Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne, on receipt of completed application documentation, with the monitoring conditions outlined in the officer's report.
- 2) £33,000 + 10% for a period of three years to Voluntary Support North Surrey, on receipt of completed application documentation, with the monitoring conditions outlined in the officer's report.
- 3) £1,500 + 10% to Runnymede Access Liaison Group, for a period of three years, on

receipt of completed application documentation, with the monitoring conditions outlined in the officer's report.

- 4) £2,900 + 10% to the Addlestone Community Association for a period of three years, on receipt of completed application documentation, with the monitoring conditions outlined in the officer's report.

661b **Meals at Home Vehicle Procurement**

The existing fleet of diesel fuelled vehicles had reached the end of its life. The Chairman was of the opinion that this item was urgent due to the existence of a time limited opportunity to secure the best possible value in the procurement of electric vehicles, in pursuance of the Council's climate change commitments. It was also important to ensure the continuity of the Meals at Home service, which was used by a number of vulnerable Runnymede Borough Council residents.

The discussions of the Community Services Committee were noted.

The desire to move the Meals at Home fleet to electric vehicles, in pursuance of the Council's desire to address climate change, was discussed. There were however various technical challenges relating to power supplies at the depot. Consideration also needed to be given to the service's continuity and the vehicles' ability to undertake reliable deliveries. A backup option, that allowed the purchase of diesel powered vehicles, was therefore required.

The Committee noted that, regardless of the vehicle type purchased, other efforts would be made to ensure that the Council continued to deliver towards its climate change commitments.

It was **resolved** that:

- 1) A new lease agreement with Apetito, for 4 x electric vehicles/diesel oven option, for a period of 36 months be agreed.
- 2) A supplementary budget estimate of £15,717 per annum be agreed.
- 3) A one off virement of £15,000, to be taken from existing Community Services budgets, for the infrastructure requirements relating to use of electric vehicles, be approved.
- 4) In the event the preferred option of electric vehicles being unviable:
 - a) Entry into a new lease agreement with Apetito for 4 x diesel vehicles be agreed.
 - b) A supplementary budget estimate of £11,139 per annum for a period of 5 years be agreed.
- 5) A waiver to the Contract Standing Orders (CSO2.6.1) be approved to direct award a contract for the agreed recommended option to Apetito, without advertising requirements, as Apetito were the only company that could provide the services required.

(The meeting ended at 10.42 pm.)

Chairman