

Runnymede Borough CouncilCorporate Management CommitteeThursday, 12 October 2023 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors C Howorth (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), A Balkan (In place of T Gracey), D Coen, M Cressey, R Davies (In place of R King), L Gillham, S Jenkins, M Nuti, M Singh (In place of S Ringham), P Snow, D Whyte and M Willingale.

Members of the Committee absent: Councillors T Gracey (Chairman), R King and S Ringham.

In attendance: Councillors T Gates.

72 Notification of Changes to Committee Membership

Councillor Balkan substituted for Councillor Gracey, Councillor Davies substituted for Councillor R. King and Councillor Singh substituted for Councillor Ringham.

73 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

74 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

75 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Singh withdrew from the meeting for agenda items 5a, 5b, 5c, 9, 11a, 11b and 12.

76 Recommendations from Committees**76a Community Services Committee - Contain Outbreak Management Fund**

The scope of the flooring maintenance works at Chertsey Hall was noted. The Committee was supportive of the proposals.

It was **resolved** that:

1. The proposed expenditure plans for the remaining Contain Outbreak Management Fund held by the Council, in 2023- 2024 be agreed.
2. The use of the existing Communities First budgets be used to fund the balance of £1,174.

76b Community Services Committee - Play Area Programme 2023/2024

The Committee was pleased to note that there had been cross party and ward member involvement in developing the proposals.

It was **resolved** that:

1. The proposed health and safety works and play area replacement plan be agreed.
2. A capital estimate of £229,000, for the replacement plan involving Surrey Towers, Pooley Green and Hythe Park, as set out in table 3 of the report, to be funded from the resources set out in table 2 (subject to any additional approvals required), be agreed.
3. The release of £100,000 for play area replacement programme provisions, set aside in the capital programme for 2023/24, be agreed.
4. An allocation of £47,000, from the 2024/2025 youth development revenue budget for the play area replacement, be agreed.
5. The virement of the revenue budgets earmarked for the replacement of play equipment to fund the capital expenditure be agreed (noting that this would show in future revenue reports as contributions to capital expenditure on the summary page of the budget).

The Committee **recommended** to the Council that:

1. A capital estimate of £565,000, for the replacement plan involving the remaining locations set out in table 3 of the report, to be funded from the resources set out in table 2 (subject to any additional approvals required), be agreed.

[Members were advised at the Community Services Committee that the capital estimate had been revised. This was however not captured in the recommendation put before the Community Services Committee, which is what was moved and agreed for communication to the Corporate Management Committee.]

The Council is therefore asked to agree a revised capital estimate of £799,000, covering both financial years, for the replacement plan to be funded from the resources set out in table 2 of the officer's report (subject to any additional approvals required).]

76c **Community Services Committee - Period Poverty - Motion from Council 20 July 2023**

Councillor A. King was thanked for bringing the motion to the 20 July 2023 Council.

It was **resolved** that:

1. A combined budget of £24,000, over three years, be agreed.
3. The Corporate Head of Community Services be delegated authority to agree the delivery of this project, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Community Services Committee, and Councillor A. King as the proposer of the motion to the Council.

77 **Bullying and Harassment Policy**

The Committee was pleased to see that a more comprehensive Bullying and Harassment Policy had been prepared.

The process for reviewing allegations made by councillors against officers was clarified, noting that this would be managed using the Council's suite of employment policies. Allegations of bullying and harassment against councillors by members of the public would also be managed utilising the Council's suite of policies relevant to the handling of such individuals. Members were advised to contact the police in the event of particularly serious

incidents.

It was **resolved** that:

1. The Bullying and Harassment Policy be agreed, subject to the inclusion of a clarification regarding allegations of bullying of councillors by officers.
4. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Head of Human Resources and Occupational Development, to agree the text of the clarification requested in 1. above, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Management Committee, Councillor Jenkins (as the requestor of this clarification), and the Corporate Head of Legal and Governance.

78 **Calendar of Committee Meetings**

The revised layout of the calendar was welcomed.

The Corporate Management Committee **recommended** that the calendar of meetings for the 2024/25 municipal year be agreed by the Council.

79 **Amendments to the Constitution**

Urgency procedures

The Committee welcomed the modernisation of the Council's urgency procedures (Standing Order 42 (SO42)). There was discussion about whether SO42 was being used as a tool to circumvent committee discussions. It was reported that the frequency and value of SO42 decisions was dependent on the issues that arose, and could therefore be highly variable. The value of recent SO42 decisions was questioned; it was stated that these decisions related to supplementary estimates, which could be reported separately to the supplementary estimates agreed by committees, should the Corporate Management Committee require it.

Contract Standing Orders

There was discussion about the advertising of contract values when seeking bids as part of the tendering process, and whether this was having value for money implications for the Council. It was noted that the Public Contract Regulations 2015 required specific information to be provided when advertising a contract above the Find a Tender Service (FTS) threshold value.

The Committee **recommended** to the Council that:

1. The proposed minor amendments to the Council's urgency provisions (Standing Order 42) and the Contract Standing Orders be agreed, subject to the minor typographical error at 2.5a of the Contract Standing Orders being corrected.
2. The Corporate Head of Legal and Governance be delegated authority to make further necessary amendments to the Constitution, to give effect to the amendments proposed in the report.

80 **Proposal to confer honorary titles and agree actions and events to mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of Runnymede administrative area**

There was a detailed debate about the proposed honours and their recipients.

Many members lauded the contributions made by Mr Cotty to both the community and the

Council. In addition, some felt that the role of a ward councillor was often underappreciated. Other members felt that whilst Mr Cotty's work was much appreciated, it was questionable as to whether it was over and above the work undertaken by many other ward councillors. The appropriateness of the Honorary Alderman title, in the context of previous awardees receiving the Freedom of the Borough, was also questioned.

The Committee debated the proposed honour for the North West Surrey Alliance (NWSA). Some members considered the proposed honour to be warranted, particularly because of NWSA's position in caring for Runnymede's residents; a role that was amplified during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was suggested that the NWSA's position in the community was not sufficiently well known to warrant being awarded Freedom of the Borough, and that the publicly available information on their website focused on the senior individuals involved in running the Alliance, and not its frontline and operational staff. It was however suggested that the proposed honour represented a good opportunity to promote the work of the Alliance, in particular the work of operational and frontline staff providing services to Runnymede's residents. It was reported that the NWSA would also be asked to send a number of operational and frontline staff to receive the award on behalf of the Alliance at a special awards ceremony in March 2024.

Some members questioned whether it was proper to recognise just healthcare workers, particularly because other individuals, such as delivery drivers and shopworkers, had also provided important services to the community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

There was discussion about the expenditure associated with the proposals. Some members felt that the anticipated cost, which did not represent new expenditure due to it being met from in-year savings, was acceptable because the proposals provided a rare opportunity to celebrate the work of partners and other individuals, whilst also commemorating a significant milestone for Runnymede as a Council.

Other members felt that the proposals should have been discussed between group leaders before being presented to the Committee. They also stated that there were more appropriate opportunities that did not involve the awarding of honours. One such suggestion included the planting of fifty trees which would, it was asserted, have also served to enhance the Council's environmental credentials.

By request of the committee, the recommendations were divided into their constituent parts, and named votes taken on each.

1. The Committee **recommended** that North West Surrey Alliance be awarded Freedom of the Borough of Runnymede.

The voting on this resolution was as follows:

In favour (7) – Councillors Howorth, Balkan, Coen, Cressey, Nuti, Snow and Willingale.

Against (4) – Councillors Davies, Gillham, Jenkins and D. Whyte.

Abstentions – none.

2. The Committee **recommended** that former Councillor Derek Cotty be appointed as an Honorary Alderman.

The voting on this resolution was as follows:

In favour (7) – Councillors Howorth, Balkan, Coen, Cressey, Nuti, Snow and Willingale.

Against (4) – Councillors Davies, Gillham, Jenkins and D. Whyte.

Abstentions – none.

3. Subject to the agreement of the Council with the awards detailed in 1 and 2 above, the Corporate Management Committee **agreed** to allocate a budget of £6,200 for the above awards, and other associated costs arising from the proposals contained within the report, which would be drawn from existing budgets.

The voting on this resolution was as follows:

In favour (7) – Councillors Howorth, Balkan, Coen, Cressey, Nuti, Snow and Willingale.

Against (4) – Councillors Davies, Gillham, Jenkins and D. Whyte.

Abstentions – none.

81 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

By resolution of the Committee, 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.

82 **Recommendations from Committees**

82a **Community Services Committee - Larchwood Drive Letting**

It was **resolved** that:

1. The premises in Larchwood Drive be leased to the organisation named in the report for a period of 10 years on the terms set out in the officer's report.
5. In the event a development Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was successfully formed, the Council grant a lease to the CIO, with the Chief Executive delegated authority to finalise the terms of the lease, in consultation with Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Community Services Committee, the Corporate Head of Law and Governance and Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration.

82b **Community Services Committee - Virginia Water Football Club Lease**

It was **resolved** that the lease and other provisions set out in the officer's report be agreed.

83 **Commercial Lettings**

Magna Square letting

The Committee noted that the proposed tenant was planning to move from their existing site in Egham Town Centre. Concerns were raised about the adverse impact of increasing unoccupied units in the area that the proposed tenant would be vacating. The Regeneration and Major Projects Member Working Party was going to be considering the health of the borough's high streets at one of its upcoming meetings.

Addlestone One letting

There was detailed discussion about the proposed activity and tenant for the unit in question. Members explored whether the proposed use of the unit was compatible with

other commercial units in the Addlestone One development. It was noted that the vacant unit was difficult to market, due its size being unattractive in the current market. The Council was liable for void costs whilst the unit whilst the unit remained unlet.

The Committee raised concerns about the prospective tenant's track record of failed speculative ventures, although it was noted that the risk associated with this was being mitigated by the inclusion of certain measures in the proposed lease such as a large deposit. The proposed tenant was also paying a substantial sum for fit out costs. The fixtures and fittings associated with the fit out would be retained by the Council in the event that the unit was vacated. There was discussion about the proposed lease and whether this represented the best possible deal for the Council. The Committee was reminded that the relationship would be with a company and not an individual. Officers were confident that the proposals were in keeping with the rates being realised in the current market, for a unit such as this one.

It was **resolved** that:

1. The leases be granted in accordance with the recommendations set out within the officer's report.
6. Authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive (Section 151) to make necessary amendments to the proposed terms in order to ensure the leases progress to completion (provided the deals continue to fulfil the Council's statutory obligation of best consideration), in consultation with the Corporate Head of Assets and Regeneration, and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Management Committee.
3. The Property and Assets Task Force be asked to review the viability of The Precinct in Egham and report back to the Corporate Management Committee.

84 **Building Compliance**

This item was withdrawn in advance of the meeting.

85 **Q2 2023/24 Projects Portfolio Updates**

The Committee discussed various elements of the report. There was particular discussion about the phased approach to the RIBA plan of work stages. Also discussed was the delay in obtaining DBS checks for new staff at the Eileen Tozer Centre.

The report was noted.

(The meeting ended at 9.58 pm.)

Chairman