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ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

REPORT of a meeting held on 6 July 2016

Members of the Cabinet:

- * S.J. Selleck (Leader)
- * A. Davis (Deputy Leader)

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| * B. Fairbank | * Mrs. K. Randolph |
| * R. Green | * C.R. Sadler |
| * Mrs. R.J.M. Lyon | * Mrs. J.R. Turner |
| Mrs. M. Marshall | |

Also present:

D.J. Archer, J. Browne, A.P. Burley, B.J.F. Cheyne, G.P. Dearlove, S.J. Foale, N. Haig-Brown, Mrs. A.E. Hill, M.F. Howard, T.G. Oliver and Mrs. M.C. Sheldon

1/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of agenda item 8 (Minute No. 11/16 refers) – Weybridge Streetscape Improvement, whilst not a disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest under the Code of Conduct, A. Davis wished that it be noted that he was a founder member of the Weybridge Town Business Group which had been pressing for the streetscape improvement to be progressed.

2/16 MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2016

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16 March 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON 20 JULY 2016

3/16 BUDGET STRATEGY 2017/18

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Portfolio Holder for Resources introduced the report that presented the first stage in the Council's annual budget planning process.

The report also updated on the Budget position for 2017/18, as was included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), together with details of the forecast savings required to balance the budget over the medium term in the context of the funding reductions from the national Government.

The Cabinet noted that whilst the Council had set a balanced budget for 2016/17 and was working from a sound financial base, it remained a very challenging period. The support that the Council could provide through all of its

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activities to stimulate and promote economic growth, business development and job creation in the Borough remained central to the delivery of the MTFs.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Council would seek to optimise the use of its reserve balances in delivering priorities, making decisions on a corporate basis and maximising opportunities to maintain an appropriate balance between short-term expenditure and long-term investment. Reserves would be used wisely for investments that would contribute towards financial independence and resilience for the Council.

With regard to rental income, Members noted that the Council currently generated £1.5 million which supported the revenue base budget. The Financial Strategy for the medium term was focused on reducing the reliance on Government grants by the year 2020 by continuing to invest in Property Assets to secure regular rental income and retaining more Business Rates.

The Portfolio Holder further reported that the Council had received notification that Surrey County Council would be reducing the funding made available to the Council for social care services by 25% in year one and 50% in year 2, totalling £200,000. Whilst there were proposals for meeting this reduction in the short term (Minute No. 7/16 refers), this reduction in funding from SCC was likely to follow in line with the Government funding reductions. It was noted that the Council currently received £800,000 of funding from SCC, with the majority of it being spent on providing services to older people as part of Community Support Services.

With regard to the move to 100% Business Rates Retention and a 4-year Local Government Finance Settlement, the Portfolio Holder reminded colleagues that the Government had announced that Councils would retain all locally raised Business Rates by 2020 under radical local government finance reforms. As part of the reforms, the Government would abolish the Uniform Business Rate and give local authorities the power to cut Business Rates to boost economic activity in their areas. In addition, core grant (i.e. Revenue Support Grant (RSG)) from Central Government would be phased out by 2020. The 2016/17 Local Government Finance Settlement announced in February 2016, included indicative figures for 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. It was noted that as part of the settlement, the Government had stated that it would offer any Council that wished to take it up, a four-year funding settlement to 2019/20. Whilst there had been no indication of the format of the plan, Councils would need to produce and submit an efficiency plan as part of the request. In this regard, Councils would have until 14 October 2016 to make this request.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Government had given local authorities the option of a multi-year finance settlement, however, the Government had proposed significant changes to the system during the course of the settlement, including a major reform of Business Rates. Accordingly, whilst a multi-year settlement would bring certainty for the first 3 years of the settlement, there was significant risk attached to accepting the multi-year settlement for year 4 and in this regard, it was proposed that the Council accept, in principle, the multi-year settlement for years 1, 2 and 3 but not year 4 due to significant negative RSG.

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As part of his introduction, the Portfolio Holder referred to the Department for Communities and Local Government's consultation on 'Self-sufficient Local Government: 100% Business Rates Retention' and discussion paper entitled 'Fair Funding Review: Call for Evidence on Needs and Redistribution'; both of which had been published earlier that day. As the consultation responses were due by 26 September 2016, the Portfolio Holder proposed an additional recommendation that officers, in consultation with the Performance and Finance Standing Panel, draft a response and that this be reported back to Cabinet in September 2016, which was supported by Members.

Whilst welcoming the comprehensive report, the Cabinet noted that in respect of the additional recommendation, a meeting of the Performance and Finance Standing Panel would be arranged in early September 2016.

RECOMMENDED: THAT

- (A) THE UPDATED REPORT AND OVERALL APPROACH TO THE PREPARATION OF THE 2017/18 BUDGET, BE AGREED;**
- (B) OFFICERS BE ASKED TO IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL INCOME STREAMS AND SAVINGS TO ENABLE A BALANCED BUDGET TO BE SET FOR 2017/18;**
- (C) OFFICERS, IN LIAISON WITH RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, WORK UP DETAILED SERVICE PLANS AND BUDGET PROPOSALS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PRIORITIES;**
- (D) IN PRINCIPLE, THE COUNCIL ACCEPT THE MULTI-YEAR SETTLEMENT FOR YEARS ONE, TWO AND THREE, BUT NOT YEAR FOUR, DUE TO SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT, AS PROPOSED IN THE FINAL SETTLEMENT IN FEBRUARY 2016, SUBJECT TO FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF ANY FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT THE PERFORMANCE & FINANCE STANDING PANEL, CABINET AND COUNCIL MEETINGS IN SEPTEMBER 2016;**
- (E) THE OUTLINE HIGH LEVEL BUDGET TIMETABLE, AS SET OUT IN SECTION 11 OF THE REPORT, BE NOTED; AND**
- (F) WITH REFERENCE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS PUBLISHED YESTERDAY, 'SELF-SUFFICIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT: 100% BUSINESS RATES RETENTION' AND 'FAIR FUNDING REVIEW: CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON NEEDS AND REDISTRIBUTION', DELEGATED AUTHORITY BE GIVEN TO THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RESOURCES, GROUP LEADERS AND THE PERFORMANCE & FINANCE STANDING PANEL, TO AGREE A DRAFT RESPONSE WHICH WOULD BE REPORTED TO CABINET IN SEPTEMBER 2016 FOR RESOLUTION.**

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4/16 SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL TOWN CENTRE REVITALISATION FUND GRANT

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Leader of the Council introduced the item and reminded Members that the Council was committed to supporting the local economy, businesses and town centres through the Enterprise Elmbridge Action Plan 2015-2017 and the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund (ECIF) in order to help ensure that Elmbridge remained an attractive place to do business.

The Cabinet was advised that ECIF had been set up in 2009 with an initial contribution of £1 million from the Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme (LABGI). The fund was designed to benefit the local economy, enhance the attractiveness of the shopping centres and attract people to use local businesses.

The Portfolio Holder updated that the grant element of the scheme had initially been set up to run until March 2011 however following its initial success it had since been extended until March 2014 and then to March 2017. To date, ECIF had supported 218 projects totalling £571,474 in grant funding and there was a current balance of £323,000 in the ECIF budget.

As a result of the Leader of Surrey County Council's announcement in July 2015 regarding an annual £1 million fund to support investment in Surrey's secondary shopping centres over the next four years, the Cabinet noted that the Council had submitted two bids in this regard. The first bid was for £100,000 of funding over two years to invest in the successful ECIF scheme and the second bid was for £250,000 to support the enabling works for the redevelopment of Weybridge Hall to facilitate a new independent cinema operator.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased to advise that the Council had been awarded £50,000 from the Town Centre Revitalisation Fund to support ECIF for 2016/17 with a further £50,000 provisionally approved for 2017/18, subject to a successful year one evaluation.

As the grant criteria set out a requirement for 50% match funding from the local authority bidding, it was proposed that £100,000 be transferred from the strategic reserve (LABGI) to top up the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund.

RECOMMENDED: THAT

(A) £100,000 BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE STRATEGIC RESERVE (LABGI) TO MATCH FUND SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S GRANT FOR YEARS ONE AND TWO, SUBJECT TO YEAR TWO GRANT BEING RECEIVED; AND

(B) THE ELMBRIDGE CIVIC IMPROVEMENT FUND BE EXTENDED FOR ANOTHER YEAR UNTIL 31 MARCH 2018.

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5/16 PROPOSED NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA AND FORUM APPLICATION FOR BURWOOD PARK, HERSHAM

(Link to Council Priorities: P1 and P3)

The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services introduced the item and advised Members that on 29 February 2016, the Council had received its first application to designate a neighbourhood area and forum for the Burwood Park Private Estate for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The proposed area and forum application was the first part of a formal process which required the Council to consult on and then consider whether to designate both the proposed area the plan would cover and the community group leading the process.

The Cabinet noted that neighbourhood planning was a right for communities introduced through the Localism Act 2011. In this regard, communities could shape development in their areas through the production of a NDP, which following examination and referendum, if found sound, would become part of the Council's Local Plan. The policies contained within the NDP would then be used in the determination of planning applications for that area. It was acknowledged that the policies produced could not block development that was already part of the Local Plan, but could shape where that development would go and what it would look like.

The Portfolio Holder reported that in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012, the Council commenced a 7 week public consultation exercise in March 2016. It was noted that a copy of the application, details on how to make representations and the date by which representations needed to be received, had been published on the website.

The Cabinet noted that 81 people had responded to the consultation which included a 46 signature petition, the results of which were as follows:

- whilst 21 people (26%) believed the proposed boundary was appropriate for designation as a neighbourhood area, 59 people (73%) believed it was not appropriate; and
- whilst 21 people (26%) stated that the proposed Forum was appropriate and representative of the local community, 60 people (74%) stated it was not appropriate.

The Portfolio Holder updated that having reviewed the submitted applications, supporting information and the responses received to the public consultation, it was considered that the proposed Burwood Park Neighbourhood area was appropriate and met the Government's requirements.

Whilst acknowledging the high levels of objection to the forum application, it was further considered that with the change to the written constitution, the proposed forum was in compliance with legislation and regulation and should therefore be designated.

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The Cabinet discussed in detail the proposal and whilst acknowledging that all the Government's requirements had been met, concern was raised regarding whether this would encourage more local areas to apply for the designation of a neighbour area and forum. In light of this, it was reiterated that whilst neighbourhood policies could be produced, these could not block development that was already part of the Local Plan.

In accordance with Part 5-30 of the Council's Constitution, the Leader invited Councillor G.P. Dearlove, one of the Oatlands and Burwood Park Ward Councillors, to address the Cabinet in respect of the item. Councillor Dearlove queried why part of Queens Road and Westcar Lane had not been included within the proposed neighbourhood area. The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services commented that whilst part of Queens Road and Westcar Lane had not been included, the properties within the proposed neighbourhood area had a consistent scale and style, and formed part of a coherent estate for residents. She further commented that properties within Burwood East had a slightly higher density and were not gated or part of a coherent estate with a formal community based group and as such the proposed area designation was deemed appropriate.

In accordance with Part 5-30 of the Council's Constitution, the Leader invited Councillor B.J.F. Cheyne, one of the Oatlands and Burwood Park Ward, to address the meeting. Councillor Cheyne had similar concerns to those raised by Councillor Dearlove, however he felt that as the Borough's ward boundaries had been changed as a result of the recent Boundary Review, his Ward now included the Burwood Park area and in this regard he felt that this application should be discussed with the relevant Ward Councillors before a decision was made.

Accordingly, whilst acknowledging that the Cabinet had delegated authority to agree the designation of the proposed Burwood Park Neighbourhood Area and Forum, in order to enable further discussions with the Oatlands & Burwood Park and Hersham Village Ward Councillors, it was proposed that the matter be referred to Council on 20 July 2016 for agreement, which the Cabinet supported.

RECOMMENDED: THAT

- (A) THE DESIGNATION OF THE PROPOSED BURWOOD PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA, WHICH WOULD BE COVERED BY THE BURWOOD PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN, BE AGREED; AND**
- (B) THE DESIGNATION OF THE PROPOSED BURWOOD PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM, WHICH WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PREPARING OF THE BURWOOD PARK NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN, BE AGREED.**

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6/16 2015/16 – 4TH QUARTER AND YEAR END COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Leader introduced the report which set out the quarterly performance monitoring against the 2015/16 basket of performance indicators, Council Plan objectives and flagship activities. It was noted that the monitoring report would be presented to the Performance and Finance Standing Panel on 7 July 2016.

In the fourth quarter and at the year end, 28 (76%) Council Plan objectives were on target and of the 9 'Flagship' activities, 7 (78%) were on target.

Cabinet noted that as this was the final report on the Council's performance in 2015/16, the report also outlined areas where performance improvement was needed and set out the action required, where it was directly within the Council's control. It was, however, recognised that performance could be affected by circumstances that were not within the Council's control, such as the weather and the economic climate. Efforts would, however, be undertaken over the coming months to drive up performance and ensure that targets were achieved.

With regard to Council Objective HT1 – Maximise value of car park assets, the Leader reported that a comprehensive review of all the Council's car parks was underway as there had not been as much investment in maintaining the car parks as there should have been.

With regard to Performance Indicator L-HS1 – Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) – cumulative, the Leader was pleased to report that the target for 2015/16 had been exceeded, with 62 affordable homes being delivered. However, whilst the target had been exceeded, the Leader advised that the delivery of affordable homes was a priority for the Administration and accordingly the target for 2016/17 would be reviewed as there was a need to increase the number of affordable homes delivered within the Borough. The Portfolio Holder for Housing further commented that another priority was the need to acquire more social housing properties in order to reduce the number of individuals on the Housing Register.

RECOMMENDED: THAT

- (A) PROGRESS AGAINST THE PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD, BE NOTED;**
- (B) PROGRESS AGAINST COUNCIL PLAN OBJECTIVES, BE NOTED;**
- (C) PROGRESS AGAINST 'FLAGSHIP' ACTIVITIES, BE NOTED; AND**
- (D) THE COMMENTS PROVIDED FOR THE TARGETS SHOWING AN AMBER OR RED TRAFFIC LIGHT ARISING FROM (A), (B) AND (C) ABOVE, BE NOTED.**

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MATTERS OF REPORT

7/16 SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S CONTRACT BUDGET REDUCTIONS FOR 16/17 AND 17/18 FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

(Link to Council Priorities: A safe, caring and healthy Elmbridge)

The Portfolio Holder for Social Affairs introduced the item and advised Members that whilst the Council's Community Support Services had received grant income for the last 23 years from Surrey County Council (SCC) to support vulnerable residents, the service was now facing a significant grant reduction.

The Cabinet was advised that SCC had confirmed that over a two year period they would be looking to reduce the Council's grant by 25% in year one and 50% in year two, totalling £197,000. The areas of core Community Support Services activity affected were those in respect of where Service Level Agreements (SLAs) were in place with SCC to deliver services to high need / vulnerable residents e.g. the Centres for the Community; Meals on Wheels Service; and Dementia Services.

The Portfolio Holder reported that in meeting the savings requirement, it was proposed to use some funding the Council was receiving from SCC this year under the Personalisation, Partnership and Prevention Plan Fund (PPP). This funding had been vital to the development, enhancement and sustainability of discretionary preventative services and Community Support Services had always developed activity with the understanding that it was a five year programme. In this regard, the Council received £180,000 a year and it was therefore proposed to use £60,000 of the £180,000 to reduce the savings to mitigate impact on the services.

In terms of seeking to meet the significant savings figure in 2016/17, the Council was looking to utilise £16,168 of savings from its budgets to ensure a more appropriate timescale was in place to implement service changes for 2016/17 and 2017/18. In order to provide a contingency in the event that identified savings were unable to be achieved, it was proposed that a sum of up to £18,000 be made available in this regard.

In addition to utilising PPP funding, the Portfolio Holder reported that a number of service reductions had been proposed in order to meet the savings requirements, specifically:

- not appointing to the post of Thames Ditton Centre Manager;
- reducing Centre Assistant hours by 30.5 hours a week;
- increasing the Relief Care Services charges;
- withdrawal of the Alz Café transport;
- closing down the evening and weekend Link Line; and
- withdrawal of the monthly Outings Programme.

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Given the uncertainty regarding the SCC funding position from 2018/19, it was suggested that the Portfolio Holder, on behalf of the Council, write to SCC highlighting the value that the robust Borough-based preventative services had on maintaining and reducing SCC's costs, and that a detailed impact assessment be undertaken now ahead of budgetary considerations for 2018/19.

During her introduction of the item, the Portfolio Holder referred to the Care Act 2014 which gave local authorities (SCC) a responsibility to assess a carer's need for support and to provide support options accordingly. In this regard, the Portfolio Holder proposed an additional recommendation that, as part of the budget savings review with Surrey County Council, Elmbridge seeks clarification as to how the 2014 Care Act funding is being used in Elmbridge, which the Cabinet agreed.

During consideration of the item, the Cabinet acknowledged that whilst savings were required, there was a need to continue to support the Borough's vulnerable and elderly residents.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the proposed way forward to meet the significant budget reduction of £197,000 from Surrey County Council over this current year and 2017/18 be agreed. With regard to the operational impact, the Council meet up to £18,000 of the budget reduction this year, to allow a more timely review to take place;
- (b) the update in respect of other areas of Surrey County Council grant income, where reductions were still being determined, as well as the impact of any reduction, be noted; and
- (c) the Portfolio Holder for Social Affairs, on behalf of Elmbridge Borough Council, writes to Surrey County Council with regard to the value the Council's robust Borough-based preventative services have on maintaining and reducing Surrey's costs and that a detailed impact assessment be undertaken now ahead of budgetary considerations for 2018/2019; and
- (d) as part of the budget savings review with Surrey County Council, Elmbridge seeks clarification as to how the 2014 Care Act funding is being used in Elmbridge.

8/16 SURREY STREETSCENE SERVICES

(Link to Council Priorities: P1, P2, P3)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture reminded Members that at the meeting of the Cabinet in November 2008, the transfer from Surrey County Council (SCC) to the Council of selected Streetscene services, specifically the responsibility for highway verge cutting, weed control and verge repairs, with effect from 1 April 2009, had been approved.

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With the transfer of services, a legal agency agreement was signed which detailed the services to be provided and whilst this agreement has since been renewed and extended, the current agreement was due to expire on 31 March 2017.

The Portfolio Holder updated that The Landscape Group (TLG) had been undertaking the cutting of the verges since responsibility had first transferred to the Council in 2009, with the contract for this work subsequently coming to an end on 31 March 2016. With the combining of the grounds maintenance and highway verge contracts into the new Green Spaces contract in 2015, the highway verges contract was included within the tender documentation and the contractor had been made aware that the new arrangement would come into effect from April 2016 with a suitable break clause should Surrey withdraw or reduce their funding.

In order to continue to provide best value for the Council, officers had agreed with TLG to continue to maintain the grass verges on a frequency based contract for the remaining year of the agency, continuing to maintain the verges at 10 urban (on a 4-week cycle) and 2 rural cuts a year.

Given that the existing agency agreement for the Streetscene services between the Council and SCC was due to expire on 31 March 2017, officers from SCC had undertaken a tendering exercise to establish a new base level of funding from 1 April 2017 onwards, should any Surrey Boroughs decide to hand back the services, or to use the contract prices provided through the framework. It was noted that the framework had been tendered on the basis of 7 urban cuts, 2 rural cuts and 3 weed spray treatments per year.

Members noted that Surrey's Local Highway Services Group Manager had contacted the Council with the financial offer for the next 3 years based on the outcomes of the Framework tender. Whilst the offer sum was a 39% reduction on the current level of funding, Surrey had indicated that they would be prepared to offer an additional 20% for staffing costs on top of that amount.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Council had secured funding from SCC for the current financial year however based on the reduced level of funding for the next 3 years, four options were proposed, namely:

- Option 1 - Carry out reduced level of cutting to the revised SCC client specification (within the level of funding offered by SCC);
- Option 2 – Maintain existing frequency (which would incur an additional cost to the Council of £3,597 a year for the remainder of the contract, in addition to the funding provided by SCC);
- Option 3 – Increase frequency to 12 (which would require a growth item in the Highway Verges Budget of £28,534 a year for the remainder of the contract); or

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- Option 4 – Hand back to Surrey.

The Cabinet discussed the four options in respect of the Surrey Streetscene services and mindful of the current budget position, agreed that Option 2 (Maintain existing frequency) should be supported. It was noted that this option would incur an additional cost to the Council of £3,597 a year for the remainder of the contract.

During the discussion, one Member acknowledged that this report was the second report on the agenda that included reductions in Surrey County Council funding and queried whether any future funding reductions were on the horizon. The Leader, in his capacity as a Surrey County Councillor, provided an update on the County Council's budget setting process and confirmed that it was likely that more funding reductions would occur in the future given the County Council's budget pressures. The Chief Executive further commented that officers were working with colleagues at the County Council and impact statements were being prepared where appropriate.

RESOLVED that Option 2 – Maintain existing frequency, be supported as the preferred option moving forward for the Streetscene Services.

9/16 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2016 IN RESPECT OF SPONSORSHIP OF ROUNDABOUTS

(Link to Council Priorities: P1, P2, P3)

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and informed the Cabinet that at its meeting on 23 March 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered a report in respect of Sponsorship of Roundabouts.

Having discussed the report in detail, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had proposed that the operation of the contract for advertising on roundabouts with Marketing Force Ltd be reconsidered with the possibility of its cancellation in light of the concerns of Members and residents together with the impact on the environment in the Borough.

The Leader acknowledged that this was a contentious issue amongst Members and whilst he could see the positives on both sides, he had asked the Strategic Director to see if there was a compromise available. The Cabinet noted that should the Council withdraw from the contract, a significant penalty would be incurred.

Following negotiations with Marketing Force Ltd., the Leader advised that a compromise had been reached which he considered should be supported. Instead of a five year contract, the negotiations had secured a contract for four years with a two year break clause where the contract could be reviewed or cancelled.

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The Cabinet supported this approach and accordingly

RESOLVED that the contract for advertising on roundabouts with Marketing Force Ltd. be supported on the basis of a four year contract, with a two year break clause where the contract could be reviewed or cancelled.

10/16 DELIVERY OF HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTION

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development introduced the item and reminded colleagues that this was an operational matter and that the Council's Organisational Development Team had responsibility for the Human Resources (HR) function. Whilst the HR service undertook a number of transactional services, it was proposed that the market be explored to see if these functions could be carried out more cost effectively. In this regard, it was believed that outsourcing the service on the basis outlined would provide the Council with more efficient service delivery and increased customer focus which would lead to improved quality outcomes.

The Cabinet noted that the scope of the procurement exercise would be to find a supplier who would take responsibility for the following functions: recruitment & compliance; telephone support; employee services; pay & reward; pay & data; pensions; employee relations; business partnering & change management; policy; strategic data; and responding to complaints; and relevant Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection Act (DPA) requests. It was further noted that corporate strategy & policy development and learning & development would not be included within the scope as these functions would be retained by the Council.

The Cabinet discussed the proposal and given that the Council already shared services with other Surrey Authorities, asked whether there was an opportunity to share the HR function in this regard. The Chief Executive commented that various providers of HR transactional functions were keen to work across the Surrey Authorities and in this regard all options would be fully explored.

One Member further commented that Members needed to be reassured that adequate comparisons had been undertaken i.e. what the current in-house HR transactional function provided compared with an external provider, in order for an informed decision to be made.

Whilst supporting the exploration of outsourcing the delivery of HR transactional functions, it was noted that as part of the proposal, consultation with staff and the Union would be undertaken, as was normal practice.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the delivery of Human Resources transactional functions, as outlined in paragraph 1.2 of the report, be explored for outsourcing through a procurement exercise; and

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- (b) a further report be presented to Cabinet in September 2016 outlining the findings from the procurement exercise.

11/16 WEYBRIDGE STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development introduced the item and reminded Members that the Council was committed to supporting the local economy, businesses and town centres through the Enterprise Elmbridge Action Plan 2015-2017 and the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund.

The Cabinet noted that over the past 12 months, the Council had worked closely with the Weybridge Town Business Group to develop a co-ordinated programme of events, environmental improvements and community initiatives to support the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Feedback from the town centre businesses and stakeholders had highlighted a range of issues and opportunities to deliver improvements to key sites within Weybridge town centre that would act as a catalyst to re-energise the town for shoppers, businesses and visitors.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Elmgrove Road to Ship Yard streetscape project aimed to create a small plaza as a focal point in the High Street through an improvement scheme. There was scope to declutter, renew and reimagine the space for events and performances, with a wide carriageway offering the opportunity to expand the pavement. The project would be developed in two phases to allow progress as and when funding had been identified. Phase one would provide some of the decluttering and environmental improvements whilst phase two would deliver the pavement widening for a flexible future event space.

The Cabinet noted the outline costs to initiate the site survey and design elements of the project together with the potential future costs of decluttering the elements in phase one, where known, which equated to £15,051.80 plus VAT. In order to initiate the project a sum of up to £6,000 was required which it was proposed would be funded through the Corporate Initiatives Revenue Budget.

One Member, who was a Weybridge Riverside Ward Councillor, welcomed the project which he felt would be a great improvement for Weybridge. He thanked the Economic Development Officer for all his work in this regard.

As part of the discussion, one Member raised concern that as part of the decluttering of the area, an APC toilet would be removed, however, whilst this was a concern, it was noted that there was another public convenience close-by.

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The Cabinet noted that once the outline project had been costed, funding bids for implementation could be sought through a Community Infrastructure Levy bid.

RESOLVED that funding of up to £6,000 from the Corporate Initiatives Revenue Budget be approved to undertake the site survey and design stage of the Elmbridge Road – Ship Yard streetscape project.

12/16 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2016

(Link to Council Priorities: A5, A6, P4, P5)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture informed the Cabinet that, at its meeting on 16 June 2016, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered three recommendations from the Countryside Consultative Group (CCG) meeting held on 17 March 2016.

Firstly, in respect of the Esher Common forestry works, whilst supporting the CCG's recommendation to reject the request for an acoustic sound barrier to be erected along the edge of the A3, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered it appropriate that a Shelter Belt Development Plan be produced by the Leisure and Cultural Services Team.

Secondly, consideration was given to a request from the Elmbridge Cycling Task Group to create a surfaced pedestrian and cyclist path from Churchfields Recreation Ground to Weybridge Station. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported in principle this proposal provided the correct materials, best route and safety aspect were given full consideration.

Thirdly, with regard to the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space – Esher Common, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee supported the CCG's recommendation that the capital expenditure improvements to Esher Common that had been included in the 2016/17 Capital Programme be fully funded from the developer's Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space contributions.

During consideration of the item, one Member, who was also a Weybridge Riverside Ward Councillor, commented that he was pleased to see the recommendation in respect of the Weybridge Heath Cycle Route. Whilst this was at an early stage, the introduction of a surfaced pedestrian and cyclist path from Churchfields Recreation Ground to Weybridge Station would be a great improvement for Weybridge and would provide a much needed link from Weybridge Station to the Town Centre.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) the request for an acoustic sound barrier to be erected along the edge of the A3, be rejected;

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- (b) in respect of the expected regrowth across Esher Common adjacent to the A3, a Shelter Belt Development Plan be produced by the Leisure and Cultural Services Team;
- (c) with regard to the Weybridge Heath Cycle Route, in principle, Officers undertake a detailed investigation into the feasibility of creating a surfaced pedestrian and cyclist path from Churchfields Recreation Ground to Weybridge Station; and
- (d) with regard to the Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space – Esher Common, the proposed capital expenditure improvements to Esher Common that had been included in the 2016/17 Capital Programme be fully funded from the developer's Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space contributions.

13/16 OUTDOOR GYM CONSULTATION RESULTS

(Link to Council Priorities: P1, P2, P3)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the item and advised the Cabinet that at the Strategic Spending Board meeting held in March 2016, £95,000 had been allocated for the installation of outdoor gym equipment at Cobham, Hersham and Molesey Recreation Grounds.

The Cabinet noted that these three areas had been highlighted in a mapping exercise that detailed areas that were least active and therefore not reaching the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity a week.

Widespread public consultation had been promoted from 15 May to 15 June 2016, and out of the 1348 responses received, the response was fairly spread across the three sites, as follows:

Hersham Coronation Recreation Ground – 36%
Cobham Recreation Ground – 34%
Molesey Hurst Recreation Ground – 30%

Given the high response rate to the public consultation and the equal distribution of the support for a green gym, the three locations were reviewed and it was concluded that the funding could be split across the 3 sites to complete 3 good sized green gyms.

The Portfolio Holder reported that if agreed, the procurement process would take approximately 8 weeks with the green gyms being completed later in the year. Should the new gyms prove popular, consideration would be given to external funding bids to extend the facilities as each site would be designed with this in mind so as to future proof any further extension.

In accordance with Part 5-30 of the Council's Constitution, the Leader invited Councillor Mrs. M.C. Sheldon, one of the Hersham Village Ward Councillors, to address the Cabinet in respect of the item. Councillor Mrs. Sheldon stated that

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she was delighted that an outdoor green gym would be installed in the Hersham Coronation Recreation Ground. She placed on record her thanks to the Council's Parks Development Officer who had been proactive in promoting this initiative.

During consideration of the item, the Cabinet supported the installation of outdoor green gyms in the three Recreation Grounds and asked that all relevant Ward Councillors be provided with the proposed locations and have the opportunity to discuss the colour of the equipment. It was also acknowledged that more advertising to promote these facilities should be undertaken in the future.

RESOLVED that

- (a) the results of the outdoor gym consultation, be noted; and
- (b) Hersham Coronation Recreation Ground, Cobham Recreation Ground and Molesey Hurst Recreation Ground be selected as the sites for new outdoor gyms.

14/16 2015/16 REVENUE & CAPITAL OUTTURN AND 2016/17 BUDGET UPDATE

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Portfolio Holder for Resources updated Members on the Revenue and Capital Outturn for 2015/16 and the 2016/17 in-year budget.

Members noted that in February 2015 the Council had approved the 2015/16 budget for council tax setting purposes at £17.0 million. As a result of variations and other changes in the anticipated spend, a revised forecast figure had been reported in February 2016 which, after taking account of the movements in provisions, had predicted an expenditure in line with the approved budget. The underspend at the time of the revised estimate had been earmarked to fund the purchase of an investment property. The actual outturn position was broadly in line with the revised forecast.

The overall position for the General Fund balance showed it remaining at £4.0 million, the required level set by the Council in accordance with the Medium and Long Term Financial Strategy.

With regard to capital outturn, the position was £11,360,220, an underspend of £146,280 compared to the revised programme of £11,506,500 approved in February 2016.

Cabinet noted the continued excellent performance in respect of the collection of Council Tax, which was at 98.8% for 2015/16.

With regard to significant issues on closing the 2014/15 Accounts, the Portfolio Holder highlighted that three issues had been identified, namely Accounting for

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Business Rates; Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); and Provisions, the details of which were outlined in the report.

Following a revaluation of the Council's assets, the Portfolio Holder was also pleased to update that the long term assets of the Authority had increased significantly.

During consideration of the item, the Leader invited Councillor T.G. Oliver, Group Leader of the Conservative Group to address the meeting. In respect of the Council's net worth, Councillor Oliver queried why there had been a reduction in the pension liability of £5.1 million. The Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive commented that when comparing the pension fund in March 2015 and March 2016, the deficit had improved which therefore makes the liability healthier. She further commented that she would be happy to provide more information to the Councillor outside of the meeting if required. The Portfolio Holder for Resources took the opportunity to provide a further update in this regard and mindful that a triennial actuarial of the pension fund was currently taking place, he had asked that, once completed, a presentation be given to all Members of the Council in respect of the pension fund.

RESOLVED that the outturn for 2015/16 and the early budget update for 2016/17, be noted.

15/16 LEADER'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Leader was pleased to announce that the Council would be launching its new website at the end of July 2016. The website had had a significant redesign and content change to ensure that residents and customers could access the information they needed and obtain critical services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Leader acknowledged the Surrey Youth Games which had taken place in June 2016. He advised that Elmbridge had achieved 5th place out of the eleven boroughs taking part. In total, Elmbridge had collected 3 Gold medals in Tennis, Girls U9 Football and Junior Boys Judo; 2 Silver medals in Girls U11 Football and Girls Touch Rugby; and 2 Bronze medals in Junior Table Tennis and Swimming. He was delighted to announce that Elmbridge had also been awarded the Fair Play award for the second year running. Overall, this was a great achievement and great to see so many children active and doing their best for the Borough.

Finally, the Leader reported that in June 2016, over 1400 Year 6 children from 23 different schools across the Borough, attended Elmbridge's Junior Citizen event organised by the Elmbridge Community & Safety Partnership. This was the largest number of children to take part in the scheme both in the Borough and across Surrey in recent years. Junior Citizen was a great way for children to learn vital safety lessons such as first aid, fire safety, internet safety, railway safety, water safety and stranger danger, and positive feedback regarding the event had been received.

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The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 8.21 pm

S.J. SELLECK
Leader

Democratic Services Officer

Mrs. T. Hulse Principal Committee and Member Services Officer

Other Officers in attendance

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| R. Moran | Chief Executive |
| Mrs. S. Selvanathan | Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive |
| R. Lee | Strategic Director |
| A. Harrison | Head of Legal Services |
| Mrs. N. Anderson | Head of Organisational Development |
| Mrs. M. Bussicott | Head of Community Support Services |
| Miss. M. Rowley | Financial Accountant |