Elmbridge Borough Council

Cabinet

Report of a meeting held on 14 March 2018

Members of the Cabinet:

S.J. Selleck (Leader)
* A. Davis (Deputy Leader) (in the Chair)
* B. Fairbank
* R. Green
* Mrs. R.J.M. Lyon
* Mrs. M. Marshall
* Mrs. K. Randolph
* C.R. Sadler
* Mrs. J.R. Turner

Also present:
Tricia W. Bland, J. Browne, A.P. Burley, B.J.F. Cheyne, Mrs. A.E. Hill-Purcell, M.F. Howard, A. Kelly and Mrs. M.C. Sheldon

80/17 Declarations of Interest

In respect of agenda item 8 (Minute No. 88/17 refers) – Arts Development Review, C.R. Sadler declared non-pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct, by virtue of being a Director of Riverhouse Barn Ltd. and a Trustee of the Walton on Thames Community Arts Trust, both of which had been referred to in the report.

In respect of agenda item 9 (Minute No. 89/17 refers) – 2018 Strategic Spending Board CIL allocations, whilst not a disclosable pecuniary interest or other interest under the Code of Conduct, Mrs. J.R. Turner wished that it be noted that she had had a separate meeting with representatives from Cobham Free School and Cobham Rugby Sports Association in respect of their application to the Strategic Spending Board. In this regard, she indicated that she would not take part in the discussion or decision on this item.

81/17 Deputy Leader’s Opening Remarks

The Deputy Leader informed the Cabinet that Mr. Jack Burns, Civic Superintendent and supervisor of the Council’s outstanding team of Civic Attendants, would be retiring from the Council on 6 April 2018 after nearly 25 years’ service. Mr. Burns was well known for his commitment, hard work & diligence and his contributions to the daily operations of the Civic Centre will be missed by all. Whilst acknowledging Mr. Burns’ loyal and excellent service to the Council, the Deputy Leader on behalf of all Members of the Council, offered his best wishes for a long and fulfilling retirement.

82/17 Minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 10 January and 7 February 2018

The Minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 10 January and 7 February 2018 were agreed as correct records.
Recommendation to Council on 18 April 2018

83/17 Claygate Recreation Ground Trust - Proposals

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Portfolio Holder for Resources introduced the report which set out various proposals for Claygate Recreation Ground Trust (CRGT) and the replacement Pavilion.

The Cabinet was reminded that in November 2016, an electrical fire had devastated the whole Pavilion resulting in fire and smoke damage throughout the building including the partial collapse of the roof. Water damage had also been evident, due to the amount of water used by the fire brigade to extinguish the flames.

In such circumstances, it would be normal practice for the Council, as owner of the facility, to secure an insurance settlement that would provide a like for like replacement as soon as possible. Since the fire, Council officers and the CRGT had been working together to ensure that any replacement building was fit for purpose and had the backing of the community.

A report had been considered by the Cabinet in September 2018, when the principle of working with the CRGT to secure a new enhanced Pavilion building had been supported. In addition, the Council's total financial commitment to the project (including the insurance settlement) had been agreed as £688,000, with a further £10,000 towards fixtures and fittings.

With regard to the insurance settlement, the Cabinet noted that, having provided all the necessary information to the insurers, a claim settlement in the region of £430,000 had been estimated. In light of the shortfall in the insurance settlement, it was proposed that the Council meet the shortfall, up to a maximum of £300,000.

In respect of the replacement Pavilion, the Cabinet noted that the CRGT had outlined its desire for an enhanced scheme which had included a new first floor; a change in roof structure; installation of a new platform lift; a new external and internal staircase; a viewing gallery; and a new associated bar and storeroom. Having asked the Council’s Quantity Surveyors to cost the design, the construction costs had been estimated at £881,000. However, it was acknowledged that this was subject to formal tender and statutory consultation.

The key issue with regard to the enhanced provision had been whether the current foundations and footings would be able to take the structural load of an additional storey. Following investigation by a Structural Engineer, the work had concluded that the foundations / footings were capable of the additional loads. The CRGT had been advised of the outcome and they had agreed that they would like to work with the community and try to raise sufficient monies to enable an enhanced scheme to be delivered at a later date, subject to the various statutory consents.
Whilst the proposal was not without risks, with the appropriate safeguards in place, it was hoped that the Council could work towards minimising those risks and in turn meet Members’ desires to support the Trust in pursuing an enhanced facility. In this regard, a number of safeguards would be put in place, the details of which were outlined in the report.

It was further noted that the CRGT had also expressed an interest in incorporating as a charitable company, which the Cabinet supported, in principle.

The Portfolio Holder considered that the proposals were a sensible way forward that provided best value for both the Council and CRGT together with the sharing of the costs. He hoped that the proposals outlined in the report would result in a vibrant Claygate Recreation Ground and replacement Pavilion.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture expressed her support for the proposals and acknowledged the £200,000 that had been raised by the CRGT towards the replacement Pavilion. She commented that she would like to see a longer lease be granted. However, further negotiations were still to take place and she hoped that this could be considered at that time.

**Recommended:** that

(a) Members agree, in principle, to support the Claygate Recreation Ground Trust’s (CRGT) wish to incorporate into a charitable company;

(b) the Council work with Claygate Recreation Ground Trust to agree a building lease followed by a full repairing and insurance lease which would give the responsibility to the Trust to rebuild and enhance the Pavilion subject to planning permission;

(c) following final confirmation of the reinstatement figure and the insurance settlement, the Council meet the shortfall in the insurance settlement up to a maximum of £300,000 to be funded from Capital Receipts and to be inclusive of the £90,000 approved in September 2017;

(d) subject to (c) above, the Council hold this sum and release it to the Trust at appropriate intervals during the construction process and subject to agreed conditions;

(e) any additional costs relating to fees & charges associated with the preparation of the design and planning application and any associated documents, studies, surveys and information as required be met by the Trust; and

(f) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Strategic Director & Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Legal Services and relevant Portfolio Holders to agree all future decisions on the project, and final terms within the above parameters.
The Portfolio Holder for Housing introduced the report that set out two new Policies, namely a Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and a Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy. Authority was also sought to ringfence up to £50,000 from the underspend on the 2017/18 Housing Budget to employ an additional officer for 12 months to meet the Council's additional duties concerning the licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), with these costs being largely or wholly met through the income derived from licence fees. Furthermore, in light of the various additional powers and duties conferred on local authorities in recent years, authority was also sought to update the Scheme of Delegations linked to the new Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.

The Cabinet noted that the Council, as a local housing authority, had a legal duty under Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004 to keep housing conditions in its area under review with a view to identifying any action that might need to be taken. The Council also had duties to operate a financial assistance scheme including those requiring the installation of disabled facilities in their homes.

The Portfolio Holder reported that as both the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance & Grant Policy were out of date, the opportunity had been taken to review and refresh both policies. It was acknowledged that there had been some significant changes in the policy, financial and legal frameworks which needed to be reflected in the Council’s approach.

Whilst having a suite of comprehensive policies was central to the effective operation of the Council’s Private Sector Housing (PSH) Team’s functions, their implementation and the resultant outcomes helped support the Council’s Vision for 2018-23 and fitted with a number of priorities within the Council Plan for 2018/19. Furthermore, the operation of the policies would help meet several of the priorities contained within the Council’s current Housing & Homelessness Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder said that the new Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy provided an overview of the broad principles and processes which the Council would seek to comply with when taking action to ensure that all private sector housing in the Borough was healthy, well managed and safe.

In respect of the Financial Assistance Policy for the adaptation and / or improvement of Private Housing, the Portfolio Holder said that this policy set out how the Council would provide financial assistance to support the provision of decent, healthy and safe housing within the Borough.

The Cabinet noted that the Council also had a legal responsibility, through the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended), to provide mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) of up to £30,000 for the adaptation of housing to meet the identified needs of elderly or disabled
residents to enable them to live safely at home. Accordingly, the revised grant and financial assistance policy sought to focus on prevention and the provision of ‘suitable living accommodation’ in light of the recommendations contained in the Aids and Adaptations Review completed for the Surrey Boroughs & Districts by Astral Advisory in April 2017.

During consideration of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Resources commented that the volume of private sector housing within Elmbridge should not be underestimated. Approximately three years ago when the Homelessness Strategy had been updated, approximately 15% were private sector housing properties within the Borough compared to 10% of social / affordable housing through registered providers. He stressed the importance of private sector housing particularly for those people that fell outside of the statutory homeless definition, and therefore welcomed the refreshed policies in this regard.

The Deputy Leader then invited Councillor J. Browne, to address the meeting. Councillor Browne welcomed the refreshed policies and was confident that the powers available to the Council for taking action to improve the condition and management of the housing stock within Elmbridge would be exploited. He stressed the need to ensure any communication regarding the policies was undertaken sensitively given that the majority of the landlords were excellent and did the best for their tenants. He further commented that if the Borough did not have the private sector housing providers then the waiting list for social housing properties would be much larger.

**Recommended:** that

(a) the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy, as set out in Appendix 2 & 3 of the report, be adopted;

(b) authority be delegated to the Head of Housing Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make any final minor amendments to the policies that may be necessary prior to publication and on an ongoing annual basis;

(c) authority be delegated to the Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Heads of Housing Services and Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Housing to allocate up to £50,000 from the underspend within the Housing Services budget for 2017/18 to employ an additional officer on a 12-month, fixed-term contract to undertake the Council’s additional responsibilities in relation to HMO licensing, on the understanding that these costs will be largely or wholly met through the income derived from the HMO licence fees and that these arrangements be reviewed by the end of November 2018;

(d) authority be delegated to the Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive to nominate officers for the purposes of discharging the various functions set out in the Private Sector Housing Enforcement
Policy and that recent legislative tasks allocated to local authorities be added to the Private Sector Property delegations recorded in Part 3 of the Council’s Constitution as follows:

- Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014;
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015; and
- Energy Act 2011; and

(e) the potential for the Council to collect income from the use of civil penalties and rent repayment orders be noted and that the use of such income by the Council be restricted to supporting and promoting its enforcement work in the private-rented sector.

Matters of Report

85/17 Delivery of the Council Vision and Priorities 2013-18

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Deputy Leader of the Council introduced the report that evaluated the delivery of the 2013-18 Council Vision and priorities.

The Cabinet was reminded that the Council’s overall Vision had been set in 2013 for a five-year period and, alongside the top priorities, had set out the necessary actions to achieve the aims of the five-year plan. The key focus of the Vision had been to maintain high levels of service performance and responsiveness.

The five-year Vision had guided the medium and long-term plans, underpinned by shorter term priorities which had helped the Council move closer to the overall Vision. The five-year Vision for 2013-18 was for Elmbridge to be “a caring, vibrant, healthy Borough in which to live and work, for all”.

Members noted that the Council had adopted various measures to assess the delivery of the Vision, which were set out in the Council Plan. Although Local Government continued to face unprecedented financial challenges, including an 88% reduction in the Government grant to Elmbridge by 2019/20, the Council had remained committed to delivering high quality services which were responsive to the needs of the residents.

In order to determine the success of the vision and top priorities, the Cabinet noted that a key method used to measure progress was via consultation with the Residents’ Panel. Accordingly, in February 2018, a five-year Vision survey had been sent to members of the Residents’ Panel via email. The survey had measured the following indicators in place for the Vision: how well residents thought the Council provided value for money; their satisfaction with Council services; and their perception of Elmbridge as a place to live.
The Deputy Leader reported that 277 survey responses had been received which had resulted in the following:

- 70% of respondents believed that the Council provided value for money;
- 83% of respondents were satisfied with how the Council ran its services; and
- 92% agreed that Elmbridge was a good place to live and work.

Under the three priorities for the last five years a number of projects had been delivered, the details of which were outlined in the report.

The Deputy Leader was pleased to report that the Council had delivered a credible performance over 2013-18, often influenced by external factors. Shifts in national policy and changes in local social, economic and environmental circumstances had resulted in increasing and varied pressures on services. However, in the majority of cases the Vision measurement results had either been fully achieved or were very close to the five-year targets.

Resolved that the performance of the Council for the last five years and achievement of the Council’s Vision and priorities over this period be noted.

86/17 Enterprise Elmbridge Action Plan 2017-2019 update

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Development introduced the report and reminded Members that in 2012, the Council had made a commitment to prioritise work related to economic development with the agreement of the first Enterprise Elmbridge Action Plan.

The Cabinet noted that the Action Plan had been refreshed in March 2015 to deliver support for the Borough’s town centres and businesses to 2017. The current Action Plan 2017-2019 had been approved in January 2017 and aimed to support sustainable economic property in Elmbridge whilst balancing enterprise, the environment and quality of life.

The Portfolio Holder provided an update on the progress made to date in respect of the implementation of the Action Plan 2017-2019 together with a number of further opportunities that had been identified to support priority areas.

The Cabinet was pleased to note that the activities contained within the Action Plan 2017-2019 had either been delivered or were on track to be delivered by the agreed timescales. Highlights from the last 12 months together with new projects for 2018 were also reported, the details of which were outlined in the report.

The Portfolio Holder also took the opportunity to provide an update on the Weybridge Streetscape Scheme. The Cabinet was reminded that the project had been awarded approximately £330,000 of Local Community Infrastructure Levy funding to renew and improve the streetscape between Elmgrove Road and
Ship Yard. Officers had been working on ensuring best value and quality for potential delivery routes and in this regard, the Pagabo Faithful and Gould procurement framework had been utilised with delivery of the project in the 2018/19 financial year. Should further funding be required to ensure the delivery of a Scheme that meets local stakeholder’s aspirations, the Cabinet agreed that local Community Infrastructure Levy funding options be explored.

The Portfolio Holder further advised that the Council would work with the Borough’s larger businesses and local schools and in this regard, officers would explore a skills partnership to help engagement between the two. In addition, she commented that the Council would continue to work closely with the Borough’s local town & village business groups and in this regard continue to provide help to the town centres so that they could adapt and survive.

As part of her introduction, the Portfolio Holder took the opportunity to thank the officers for their hard work and support.

Whilst acknowledging the need to work with the larger businesses within the Borough, the Portfolio Holder for Housing commented that the smaller businesses were also very appreciative of the work that the Council had been undertaking which had also provided various networking opportunities.

Resolved that

(a) the progress of the Enterprise Elmbridge Action Plan 2017-2019 and the proposed additional activities to be delivered in 2018/19 be noted; and

(b) the progress on the Weybridge Streetscape Scheme, as set out in paragraph 3 of the report, be noted and a further Community Infrastructure Levy bid be brought forward to the Local Spending Board should additional funding be required to deliver the Scheme.

87/17 Proposals for the continuation of the Elmbridge Homeownership Assistance & Perfect Fit schemes

(Link to Council Priorities: H1)

The Portfolio Holder for Housing introduced the report which sought agreement to invest monies from the Council’s Affordable Housing Enabling Fund to support the continuation of the Elmbridge Homeownership Assistance Scheme (EHOAS) with Catalyst Housing Group and to extend the Perfect Fit Scheme with PA Housing for a further two years, recognising the contributions that both schemes made in meeting local housing need.

The Cabinet was reminded that the EHOAS helped households who were living and / or working in Elmbridge and who aspired to become home-owners to achieve this, where otherwise they would not be able to afford to. The Scheme offered a 2.5% interest equity loan of up to £90,000 to bridge the gap between what a household could raise through a deposit & mortgage and the purchase price.
Whilst applicants for the EHOAS currently had to have a gross household income of less than £60,000 per annum, in light of analysis in respect of the affordability of homes for sale at the lower end of the market, Members were advised that even with an equity loan of £90,000, households on lower incomes and modest deposits could struggle to afford to buy family-sized homes. Accordingly, it was proposed to increase the maximum gross household income (per annum) allowable under the Scheme from less than £60,000 to less than £80,000.

As an equity loan, half of the value of redeemed loans would be returned to the Council. In this regard, the Cabinet was pleased to note that since December 2017, 15 loans had been redeemed and the Council had received an uplift based on its share of the rise in the value of the properties upon which the loans had been redeemed.

Officers had been in discussion about replenishing the loan-pot so as to allow more households to be assisted in the Scheme. In this regard, it was proposed to allocate a further £525,000 from the Council’s Affordable Housing Enabling Fund to support the extension of the Scheme, on the understanding that Catalyst Housing Group committed a further £500,000. The commitment of both parties to provide additional funding together with the raising of the gross annual household maximum income threshold would be formalised through a Deed of Variation to the original legal agreement adopted in 2011.

With regard to the Perfect Fit Scheme, it was noted that the Scheme had originally been launched as a one-year pilot in April 2012 to encourage PA Housing (formerly Elmbridge Housing Trust) tenants under-occupying their homes to downsize so as to free up the property for a family needing accommodation of that size. Under the current Scheme, payments of up to £4,000 were offered to tenants moving to PA Housing’s ‘Independent Living Accommodation’ and up to £2,500 if tenants downsized within the general-needs housing stock.

The Cabinet was pleased to note that to date, a total of 163 households had downsized as a result of the Scheme, which meant that 326 households had benefitted as a whole. Unfortunately, interest in the Scheme had decreased since the launch in 2012, although it had been considered understandable given that there had been a backlog of demand that had built up over a number of years which had now been met. Whilst the numbers moved going forward could be less than achieved in the early years, it was felt that there was still a clear case for continuing with the Scheme, given what it delivered for residents and value for money.

As at the end of December 2017, the Perfect Fit Scheme had available funds of £171,000. In this regard, it had not been thought necessary for further funds to be committed from the Affordable Housing Enabling Fund but it was considered that the Scheme should be extended until 31 March 2020 which should be sufficient to support in the region of a further 45 moves. Should the continuation of the Scheme be agreed, it was proposed that authority be delegated to relevant
officers to conclude a revised funding agreement with PA Housing, carrying-over any underspend on the existing commitments.

During consideration of the report, the Deputy Leader invited Councillor J. Browne, to address the meeting. Councillor Browne was delighted that the two Schemes would be continued given that they were both flagship policies for the Council and assisted with dealing with various homelessness issues. He fully supported the EHOAS which would continue to allow individuals to get on the housing ladder particularly as the house prices in Elmbridge were significantly high. He further commented that the successful Perfect Fit Scheme allowed people to downsize and therefore free up larger homes for larger families. Without putting pressure on individuals, the Scheme also eased the process for moving to a smaller property.

Resolved that

(a) a further allocation of £525,000 from the Affordable Housing Enabling Fund to be agreed to extend the Elmbridge Homeownership Assistance Scheme on the understanding that Catalyst Housing committed a further £500,000;

(b) the maximum annual gross household income to be eligible for the Elmbridge Homeownership Assistance Scheme be increased from below £60,000 to below £80,000 to reflect changes in the relationship between local property prices and income since the Scheme began in 2011;

(c) authority be delegated to the Heads of Housing, Finance and Legal Services to vary the existing legal agreement with Catalyst Housing to reflect the additional funding provided to the Elmbridge Homeownership Assistance Scheme and the changes in the maximum income threshold;

(d) the continuation of the Perfect Fit Scheme with PA Housing, up to 31 March 2020, be agreed; and

(e) the Interim Head of Housing Services be authorised to conclude a new funding agreement with PA Housing, to reflect the continuation of the Scheme until 31 March 2020, with the moves delivered being met by the carry-forward of the underspend of the Council’s commitment for the years 2016/17-2017/18.

88/17 Arts Development Review

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

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the report and indicated to Members that a Strategic Review of the Boroughs Arts Development had been undertaken which had provided the opportunity to evaluate the current arts programme.
The Cabinet noted that the Arts Review, which had been prepared following extensive consultation, set out a clear direction for the Arts Development Service to support local arts organisations as well as to benefit the local community.

The Review had provided an excellent opportunity to strategically review the current arts service and one of the key outcomes moving forward from the review had been to clearly communicate the aims of the Arts Development Service to internal and external stakeholders, and to encourage partners to work with the Council to achieve these objectives.

The Portfolio Holder reported that a number of actions had been identified from the Review, the details of which were outlined in the report, and these would be progressed by the Arts Development Officer together with other partners, as appropriate. She further commented that now the Borough had various modern sporting facilities, it was the right time to consider the provision of the arts.

As part of her introduction, the Portfolio Holder thanked the Arts Development Officer for all the work undertaken in respect of the strategic review.

During consideration of the report, the Deputy Leader invited Councillor B.J.F. Cheyne to address the meeting. Whilst agreeing that arts provision was an important area, Councillor Cheyne expressed his disappointment that whilst the review had been strong on history, it had not provided any detail on forward planning. In addition, he was disappointed to note that the Charity of Robert Phillips had not been included within the stakeholder interviews. He reminded Members that there were many other Charities and arts organisations within the Borough that were as important as the RC Sherriff Trust. He commented that his main concern was that the review had not gone into any detail regarding venues. The Borough did have a major venue which was the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse in Walton. However, there were other venues that made a significant contribution to the Borough including Vera Fletcher Hall in Thames Ditton and Riverhouse Barn in Walton. With regard to the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse, the report referred to a sum of £50,000 having been set aside for maintenance works which it was envisaged would extend the life of the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse for a further five to ten years. In this regard, he was concerned that the Council continued to put money into the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse and whilst he would not like to lose the facility, he felt that plans for a future venue should be progressed. He further commented that a project to build a quality new arts venue within the Borough would likely be a five-year project and therefore this should be begun as soon as possible.

Whilst agreeing that a new arts venue should be considered within the Borough, the Portfolio Holder for Housing commented that external funding streams should also be exploited in this regard.

The Deputy Leader then invited Councillor A. Kelly, the Council’s representative on the Playhouse Users Committee, to address the meeting. Councillor Kelly queried why the reference in the report in respect of the £50,000 sum for the maintenance works to the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse had been provisional. He
further commented that a new venue was required and in this regard, a new ‘Playhouse’ should be progressed.

The Portfolio Holder for Social Affairs also supported a new venue within the Borough which she considered should be a similar size to that of the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse.

Whilst welcoming the comments from Members and being mindful of the other projects that the Council was currently progressing, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture agreed that she would also like to see a multi-performance facility within the Borough that was fit for purpose. In this regard, options and costings would be considered.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources expressed his support for a new venue which he considered should also be capable of being used for open meetings, as the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse currently was. He also acknowledged that a project on this scale would take at least five years and therefore there was a need to start work at the earliest opportunity.

Given that the recommendation before Cabinet was to note the Strategic Review, Members considered that additional wording should be added to progress proposals for a new arts venue. In this regard, the Chief Executive suggested that the following wording be added to the recommendation, which the Cabinet fully supported:

“…and that an early start be made to pursue proposals for a new Arts venue to replace the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse which is capable of accommodating public meetings and larger gatherings.”

Resolved that the Strategic Review of Arts Development and actions be noted and that an early start be made to pursue proposals for a new Arts venue to replace the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse which is capable of accommodating public meetings and larger gatherings.

89/17 2018 Strategic Spending Board CIL allocations

(Link to Council Priorities: P2)

The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services introduced the report that set out the recommendations of the Strategic Spending Board.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 were currently being reviewed at a national level. She reminded Members of the criteria for CIL and reiterated that CIL was intended to support the provision of new infrastructure which could be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure including transport, schools, hospitals etc. and could not be used to fund regular maintenance projects unless directly associated with a development.
Given the views of residents following the recent consultation about the infrastructure deficit that was currently being experienced and being mindful of the increase in the number of new homes that the Council was expected to deliver, the Portfolio Holder stated that it was essential that the Borough built up a significant infrastructure fund to be able to deal with these pressures. In this regard, she advised that there was currently a fund of unallocated CIL of approximately £10 m. However, this amount was split between the strategic fund and the local fund.

The Cabinet noted that on 22 February 2018, the Strategic Spending Board had considered thirteen separate applications for strategic funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The applications comprised:

- 6 highway applications from Surrey County Council for highway schemes which included 4 safety and sustainability improvement projects and 2 resurfacing schemes;
- 1 application from Surrey County Council for library facilities;
- 1 joint application from the Education and Skills Funding Agency / Cobham Free School and Cobham Rugby & Sports Association for playing pitch provision for a new secondary school;
- 3 applications from Surrey and Sussex Police for capital projects; and
- 2 applications from Elmbridge Borough Council seeking funding to improve sporting and leisure facilities.

The Portfolio Holder reported that five of the applications, totalling £835,144, had been recommended for full or partial funding. The Cabinet noted that four of the applications had been deferred and because of the forthcoming publicity restrictions period, they would be considered early in the new Municipal Year.

The background to the decisions and the recommendations of the Strategic Spending Board was outlined in the report.

During consideration of the report, the Deputy Leader invited Councillor A. Kelly to address the meeting. Councillor Kelly was pleased to note that the application from Surrey County Council in respect of funding to improve the cycle facility in Terrace Road, Walton on Thames, had been refused. He raised concern regarding the two applications from the Council that had not been considered or determined at the meeting. As these applications were for funding for facilities within Walton on Thames, he was disappointed that there would now be a long delay before they were considered.

The Deputy Leader then invited Councillor J. Browne to address the meeting. Councillor Browne asked that the recommendation in respect of the Cobham Free School and Cobham Rugby & Sports Association application for funding towards an artificial playing pitch be reconsidered and changed to grant the full amount applied for, namely £795,338, rather than the Strategic Spending Board’s proposal of £471,144.87. He advised that, having been searching for a
permanent site within Cobham for some time, the Education and Skills Funding Agency had acquired Munro House in Cobham for the new Secondary School, which was adjacent to the Cobham Rugby Club. Once the building was empty, works would be undertaken to convert the building into a School and it was expected that the School would be open from September 2019. Councillor Browne advised that unfortunately the site acquired had very little outside facilities and the Cobham Rugby & Sports Association had agreed to have one of its pitches converted to an artificial playing pitch with a 25-year lease being offered to Cobham Free School. Whilst the Strategic Spending Board had recommended to partially fund the application, there was a shortfall of £320,000 and unfortunately there was no other way that the applicants would be able to source this shortfall. Councillor Browne stated that should the additional funding not be supported, the project would halt and the arrangements currently in place for getting the children from the temporary Cobham Free School in Molesey to and from sporting facilities would continue. Given that it had been reported that there was currently £10 million of unallocated CIL funds and mindful that Schools did fall within the criteria for infrastructure funding, Councillor Browne asked that this recommendation be reconsidered.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services acknowledged the comments made by Councillor Browne and reiterated that the application, if fully granted, would result in over £750,000 of funding being granted to one School. It was considered that this application was very specific and would benefit only the School and Rugby Club. Whilst sympathising that the new School site did not have its own outside facilities, the Portfolio Holder stressed that the amount requested of £750,000 was a significant sum that would benefit only one School with little opportunity for anyone outside the School to use the facilities. Therefore, she advised that she could not support a change to the recommendation.

The Cabinet acknowledged the role of the Strategic Spending Board and as there was a clear process in place for the consideration of applications for funding, it was not considered appropriate to make a change to this recommendation.

The Deputy Leader then invited Councillor Mrs. M.C. Sheldon to address the meeting. As a Member of the Strategic Spending Board, Councillor Mrs. Sheldon referred to the deferred application from Surrey County Council for the resurfacing of Seven Hills Road and St. George’s Avenue. Given that three weeks had now passed since the Strategic Spending Board meeting and as these two areas required urgent work, she sought clarification from the Strategic Director as to whether the requested information had been provided by Surrey County Council. The Strategic Director reported that a detailed letter had been sent to Surrey County Council and whilst he had received an acknowledgement, no further information had been received.

The Deputy Leader then invited Councillor M.J. Howard to address the meeting. Councillor Howard also referred to the deferred application from Surrey County Council for the resurfacing of Seven Hills Road and St. George’s Avenue. Having walked the length of Seven Hills Road on two occasions, he considered
that this resurfacing work was essential. Walking on the pavement had been dangerous due to the debris in the potholes being thrown on to the pavement by larger vehicles.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services responded that Surrey County Council were responsible for safety defects on the public highway and in this regard they had a duty and should therefore be discharging it.

Regarding the application from Surrey County Council in respect of improvements to the pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of Ashley Church of England Primary School, the Portfolio Holder for Resources expressed his support for this scheme and asked that an amendment be made to the wording of the recommendation so that the allocation of the funding was subject to prior agreement of the detailed scheme of improvements with the Ward Councillors, the Head Teacher of the School and parents’ representatives. Having acknowledged that this had been discussed at the Strategic Spending Board, the Portfolio Holder for Planning Services and the Cabinet supported this amendment.

Resolved that the recommendations made by the Strategic Spending Board, as set out at Appendix A of the report, be agreed subject to the following amendment:

- £130,000 be allocated to Surrey County Council to improve the pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of Ashley Church of England Primary School. Allocation of this funding to be subject to:
  
  (i) prior agreement of the detailed scheme of improvements with the Local Elmbridge Borough Council Ward Members, the Head Teacher of Ashley Church of England Primary School and parents’ representatives; and

  (ii) strict adherence to the following delivery timescales as set out below:

        April 2018 – commencement of design  
        December 2018 – completion of design  
        31 December 2018 – total completing of construction of scheme at all three locations of the project.


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The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 8.23 pm

A. Davis  
Deputy Leader (in the Chair)
Democratic Services Officer

Mrs. T. Hulse Principal Committee and Member Services Officer

Other Officers in attendance

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
I. Burrows Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
C. Waters Interim Head of Housing Services
Ms. A. Crouch Policy Manager
S. Nottage Private Sector Housing Manager
Ms. T. Hennigs Arts Development Officer
D. Perkins Economic Development Officer
Ms. E. Lewis Sports Development Officer