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ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES of PROCEEDINGS at the MEETING of the COUNCIL held on Wednesday, 19 April 2017

Members of the Council:

- * Mrs. T. Shipley (Mayor)
- * Rachael I. Lake (Deputy Mayor)

* Ms. R. Ahmed	*	V.G. Eldridge	*	Mrs. M. Marshall
* D.J. Archer	*	Mrs. C. Elmer	*	Mrs. D.M. Mitchell
* M. Axton	*	B. Fairbank	*	A.M. Muddyman
* M.J. Bennison	*	M.J. Freeman	*	T.G. Oliver
* Tricia W. Bland	*	S.J. Foale	*	A.R. Palmer
* L.J. Brown	*	R. Green	*	T. Popham
* J. Browne	*	N. Haig-Brown	*	Mrs. K. Randolph
* A.P. Burley	*	P.M. Harman	*	I. Regan
* O.T. Chappell	*	P.R.C. Heaney	*	C.R. Sadler
* B.J.F. Cheyne	*	Mrs. A.E. Hill	*	S.J. Selleck
* A. Coomes	*	N. Houston	*	Mrs. M.C. Sheldon
* Mrs. C.J. Cross	*	M.F. Howard	*	Mrs. J.R. Turner
* K. Cross	*	Mrs. S.R. Kapadia	*	J.A. Vickers
* A. Davis	*	A. Kelly	*	G.L. Woolgar
* G.P. Dearlove	*	A.H. Kopitko		
* I. Donaldson	*	Mrs. R.J.M. Lyon		

* Denotes attendance

50/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

51/16 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 February 2017, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

52/16 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor began by acknowledging that she had had the pleasure of attending many interesting events since the Council meeting.

At the beginning of March, the Mayor and Consort had attended the 30th Anniversary celebrations of the Hersham Village Market. The Market was open every Friday between 10.30 a.m. and 12.00 p.m. and offered for sale an incredible array of foods, gifts and cards. The Mayor had been delighted to attend such a wonderful celebration and congratulated Hersham in this regard.

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Other engagements had included the Elmbridge Drama Festival; the launching of a Modern Pentathlon Charity Event at Esher Rugby Club; the Surrey Poppy Appeal Cadet Evening at Gordons School; the Elmbridge School Choirs Festival at ACS Cobham International School; and the Women's Day of Prayer. The Mayor had also attended a dinner for Wonderful Women that had been held at Sandown Park and she had been staggered by the vast amount of charity work that the group had achieved over the years. The Commonwealth Flag had been raised at the Civic Centre on 13 March to mark Commonwealth Day and the Mayor had also supported a fundraising event at the Sam Beare Hospice on the same day.

On 9 March 2017, the Council's Long Service Awards had taken place and the Mayor had been privileged to present several officers of the Council with certificates for long service, some of which recognised 30 years' service. The Mayor paid tribute to this dedication to public service to Elmbridge.

The Mayor had also been proud to attend the Heritage Awards on 29 March at Loseley House. Elmbridge had been shortlisted for an award out of 17 very prestigious entries for the restoration of important and / or iconic buildings. The building concerned was the Home of the Compassion in Thames Ditton which was a Grade II* listed building. Two officers from the Planning Services Team together with Councillors Mrs. S.R. Kapadia and Mrs. K. Randolph were present at the ceremony and although Elmbridge didn't win an award, being shortlisted in such an outstanding field of contestants was a real accolade.

The Mayor also highlighted two fundraising events that had been held in aid of her chosen Charities, Elmbridge Community Link (ECL) and Cheer. The first was the Consorts Lunch which had been held on 24 March at Brooklands College. The Brooklands College students had produced an outstanding three course meal and provided a professional service to the guests. The Mayor, on behalf of her Consort, thanked all the gentlemen who had supported the lunch and Mr. Allan Winn who had given an excellent talk about Brooklands Museum.

The second event was the Golf Day that had been held on 3 April where a record 18 teams had taken part. The weather had been fantastic which enabled the players to enjoy their golf at the beautiful Surbiton Golf course which looked wonderful in the bright sunshine. The Mayor thanked Councillor Glenn Dearlove for his hard work putting the day together which helped to raise over £2,250. Whilst thanking the Mayor for her enthusiasm on the day, Councillor Dearlove took the opportunity to present Councillor T.G. Oliver with some wine in recognition of his team winning the challenge set at the previous Council meeting.

53/16 LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

1. Question asked by N. Houston to the Leader of the Council, S.J. Selleck

Councillor Selleck, as a relatively new Councillor to this Council and as someone who is representing a Ward with green belt land being considered in one of the options which has been consulted on, I listened with great

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interest at the last full Council meeting to Councillor Bennison's submission regarding a plan that he said his Committee had produced some months ago which was "spade ready" and could "solve the whole problem of affordable housing" within this Borough. He said that our officers were fully aware of the plan which consists of building over our car parks and that 350 units could be built in this way in the first year and it would solve the problem of affordable housing in one fell swoop.

Could you therefore please tell me what you have been able to establish about this plan, what results could be achieved if it was to go ahead and if it does indeed represent a viable alternative option.

Would this solution mean we could offset any building on green belt?

Response given by S.J. Selleck

I would like to thank Councillor Houston for his question and also like to thank him for the opportunity to clarify the situation from the last Council meeting.

Madam Mayor, I think in common with many Members in this Chamber, at the last meeting, I was quite surprised at Councillor Bennison's statement. This was reflected in the correspondence that many colleagues will have received as well as myself from interested and intrigued residents as to why this was not the centrepiece of the recent consultation on the options for the next Local Plan.

The actual position is that in recent years a number of companies have expressed interest in building flats over our car parks. Councillor Bennison was correct that one company in particular had proposed a scheme for modular starter homes over one or two of our car parks. Some preliminary work was carried out with them in 2015 but all this was speculative and was subject to procurement and financial backers for that business model. The company was in effect a start-up company and whilst they were looking at a number of options in different areas at that time, they did not have any completed schemes as they were still seeking financial backing.

At the time they presented various sketches of what they thought might be possible but these were only indicative plans. It was left to our Strategic Director, Ray Lee, to keep in touch with the company as they progressed the schemes and hopefully a viable business case. Whilst he had met with them a number of times after their presentation, they have not, to this date, come forward with any plan or business case for either car park. Therefore, I am afraid that Councillor Bennison's comment that the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director had a plan in their drawer is simply incorrect. And Councillor Bennison is quite wrong to suggest that there was a 'spade ready' scheme and that 350 units could be built more or less straight away.

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I can assure all Members and residents that had there been any extra plans for extra homes these would be progressed in the normal way through the Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and then full Council.

I should also like to point out that other companies regularly express an interest in this type of development on our car parks and we always engage positively to explore these plans.

However, having discussed this matter with officers, it is clear to me that these sites need to be developed at a very very high density and in multiple storeys in order to make them viable and therefore do not necessarily work in environmental terms in some locations. In terms of overall numbers, we are usually talking about 50 to 70 units on some of our larger car parks. They are also difficult to develop without reducing the car park use on the ground floor, where they can work.

As I have said previously, we are always open to these sort of approaches and we will always investigate the contribution that these schemes could make to our overall housing need. However, they will not in any way solve our housing need and they are not the panacea that some have assumed. At best they will make only a small contribution towards meeting our overall housing need.

Supplementary Question by M.J. Bennison

I would like to take the Leader to task. If this company, without going into any details, doesn't really exist and is just one of thousands can you tell me why Ray Lee is having a meeting with them tomorrow? That would be part of my question. You haven't come back with anything positive from my question in the first place. You haven't come in with anything about building under car parks. You haven't discussed anything about putting things over the top of reservoirs. It was suggested in the minutes on page 7, page 8 that I would be invited to that particular meeting to put my side over. I wasn't invited to it and I don't gate-crash things I am not invited too. I am sorry but you are wrong. Most of what I have said is correct. I am not saying it is the 'be all and end all' with one company and funnily enough nor are you. So where the heck are you going with this. I just give up.

Response given by S.J. Selleck

As I said to this Chamber, we explore every avenue possible. I did speak to the Strategic Director recently. I did ask him to contact this company to see if they still existed. And they are still around. So what I am saying is that this Administration explores all avenues. We do not stop ourselves looking at every option. It is two years ago nearly since they last had a discussion with this Council They have yet to come up with any proposals as have anybody else. Clearly we are looking at all these car parks, we are looking at every option. But what I am saying is that from the last meeting you said, did you not, that there was a 'spade ready' plan in the drawer of

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the Chief Executive and Strategic Director. I have answered that: there isn't one. There isn't a plan otherwise it would be presented wouldn't it.

Supplementary Question by M.J. Bennison

At our Committee meeting of four, and certainly three of them are here at the moment, we went through all the plans. We had a complete presentation from that particular company. We pushed it over and pushed it back to the Senior Management of this Council and I stand by what I say. There was a plan and there are two people here, both from my Committee, both telling you that what I said is true. Actually there's a fourth, the fourth one is over there. I do object to telling me that I am wrong.

Supplementary Question by A.P. Burley

I, along with Councillor Houston and Councillors Chappell & Vickers, represent the Ward in which so called weakly performing green belt has recently been part of the consultation. There is of course much more to housing need than just affordable but could the Leader please comment on the extent of affordable delivery versus the target for the Municipal Year and what specific measures, because we have heard a lot of talk about proposals, but could you comment on specific measures to ensure that the deficit of the affordable housing target does not deteriorate further.

Response given by S.J. Selleck

Madam Mayor, I haven't got specific numbers to hand but we are exploring all options. We inherited a situation where very few affordable housing units were being provided for this year. Councillor Green, the Portfolio Holder, has been working extremely hard with the Housing Team as the Affordable Housing Panel would know, that we have lots of plans in place but it does take time. I think several of the major schemes unfortunately driven by Paragon, have not come through on the timescale that they originally anticipated. So I think that the numbers next year will be significantly higher than this year. But as I say, this is one of the key plans of this Administration to produce more affordable and probably more importantly more social housing for this Borough.

Supplementary Question by S.J. Foale

I just wanted to try and find some middle ground between Councillor Bennison and the Leader. The car parks do present an opportunity, and you said, that may be 50 to 70 houses on some of them. One of the impediments to any scheme would be getting planning permission for instance. Affordable housing is critical in this area as we know so is it not something that the Council could actually move ahead on and look to get planning permission itself to build on some of those car parks because companies would be much more likely to come forward having known the boundaries etc. of what the scheme might be. That way we could at least profess it because it is really important that we crack on and I don't see any

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progress all I see is the bickering here and what I would really like to see is some progress because all of us, I know that is true on the other side, are desperate to get the affordable housing in.

Response given by S.J. Selleck

I find it quite difficult to answer. I totally agree with you. We are looking and investigating every situation. Some of this is commercially sensitive and that is why I have said I am somewhat reluctant to express any firm proposals but nothing is off the table. We are investigating as many options as possible to have more affordable and social housing built in Elmbridge.

Supplementary Question by R. Green

I certainly back up what has been said. We do have the new Affordable and Social Housing Working Group of which James Browne is the Chairman and we do have a meeting in a few weeks' time at which reports are coming back. There is progress being made on social housing for rent which is my main concern. People talk about affordable housing but what is affordable. If you have got £1 million, you can afford a £1 million house but if you haven't you have to go for social rented housing. My question is, was the Leader aware of any official meeting with Councillor Bennison and the others that he indicated, taking place and was it just a meeting between the opposition Members or were Members of this side of the Chamber also invited to the meeting. In which case was it an official meeting?

Response given by S.J. Selleck

The answer to Councillor Green's question, I was not aware of any official meeting that was open to other Members of this Chamber.

2. Question asked by J. Browne to the Portfolio Holder for Planning Services, Mrs. K. Randolph

'Will the Portfolio Holder kindly give us full details of all efforts that were made by her department (and others within the Council) to publicise the most recent round of applications for CIL funds which have been dealt with in the last few weeks by the various Local Spending Boards?'

Response given by Mrs. K. Randolph

There are a number of ways in which the CIL spending rounds process is publicised. Firstly, Officers write to all the local public infrastructure providers such as Surrey County Council, the Environment Agency, the Police and other key service providers such as local schools. Alongside these external organisations all local Members are notified of the spending rounds and encouraged to publicise this to local groups in their areas. Information is placed on the Council's webpages and where possible the Council's newsletter and promoted at other public forums such as Let's

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Talk Elmbridge. I am sure if Councillor Browne or indeed any other Councillors have any suggestions about how communications about the CIL spending process could be improved we would be very willing to consider them.

Supplementary Question by Mrs. D.M. Mitchell

Can the Portfolio Holder assure us that the officers are not discouraging applicants. I am very surprised that a would be applicant was told not to apply in my area and when I looked at what was wanted I cannot understand why that advice was given. We have quite a lot of money which we would very much like to be used for our community so could I suggest Portfolio Holder that more of these Committees themselves make the decisions with the advice of course of the officers that sometimes it seems to me that applicants are being put off and we don't hear about it and I think when we have got money floating around, that is a shame. I hope you will agree.

Response given by Mrs. K. Randolph

Thank you very much and I certainly agree that we have, and your area particularly, has a substantial amount of money and that it hasn't all been spent at the most recent rounds. If you don't mind I will get more details from you and I'll pursue that particular incident separately. But just to say that in a very broad basis, the officers take the view that any the proposals, or any applications being put forward, have to be related to infrastructure relating to recent developments and the definition of infrastructure, whilst it is broad, includes roads and other transport infrastructure; flood defences; schools and other education facilities; medical facilities; sporting and recreational facilities and open spaces. I appreciate your point, and if you don't mind I will get some details and deal with that separately.

Supplementary Question by S.J. Foale

We had a very good CIL meeting except for one thing. It happened the day after Cabinet and it meant because the decision has been made that all decisions at CIL need to be ratified by Cabinet, that it is now going to be months before a significant project starts in Weybridge and this is incredibly frustrating. This is something we have been working on for a long long time. Residents invariably say things are slow in Council and getting things done and this is just another example of that happening. Purely by scheduling it a week before we could have got it to Cabinet and we could be actually starting the build in Weybridge Town Centre. Now we have got to wait months for it to be approved at Cabinet. I asked at the meeting whether anything or not could be done to speed the process up - could it go out of Committee to Cabinet - and I still haven't heard anything back. So, I am really asking you as Portfolio Holder if you can look at this and we can progress it before the next Cabinet which again will make a tremendous difference in the Town of Weybridge.

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Response given by Mrs. K. Randolph

Put bluntly, I don't think at this stage there is anything we can do to progress this more quickly because that is part of the process. However, I will look into the point as you make the point that had the timing of the spending board discussions taken place prior to the previous Cabinet meeting then it would have been progressed more quickly. So, I think that is something yes, we will take on board but I don't think I am afraid that we can do anything about the present round of CIL spending recommendations.

Supplementary Question by R. Green

In the circumstances of people not being clearly aware of what the criteria is for applying for grants, is it worth us sending an e-mail to all Members setting out the rules on this so that everyone is aware of what can be applied for and what cannot be applied for so that everyone knows throughout the Chamber the rules.

Response given by Mrs. K. Randolph

I am very happy to arrange for that to take place.

Supplementary Question by J. Browne

I would like to thank the Portfolio Holder for her answer to my earlier question.

At the most recent Cobham and Oxshott Local Spending Board which I Chair, we allocated a total sum of £160,000 and we did that by allowing all the applications that came before us in full, and in fact we allowed one of the applications to make a minor increase to their application. However, we did have £520,000 in the pot and I spoke to colleagues around the Chamber after that meeting and found out that this is simply not an isolated example what had happened in Cobham. I very much doubt that in the current climate that this was because there was no need for the money. Now the Portfolio Holder referred to the publicity in relation to the website and messages sent to Councillors. I saw an A5 sheet which I placed myself on one of the Council's noticeboards which I manage. I do wonder however how many of our charitable and social organisations were aware that the bidding process was open and my question to her this evening is will she commit herself tonight to review the way in which this Council publicises the availability of the money so that we can ensure that next year there are more applicants?

Response given by Mrs. K. Randolph

Yes, I am very happy to agree that we conduct a review because we are underspending and we've got money in the pot and I absolutely agree that we need to maximise the amount of publicity we give this.

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Supplementary Question by B.J.F. Cheyne

As far as the publication is concerned, we hold one of these Local Spending Boards per year and all Members are on each of the 6 Area Boards and they are part of that meeting and to extend the chance of getting further applications through really it is very much down to local Members to go out to their Wards and get people to apply. Several that have come to our Board over the last few years I have personally put in touch with. Will the Portfolio Holder undertake to produce a reasonable synopsis of what is done, which she has already done, and get this out to all Members and may be put it out two or three times a year so that we can actually get Members slightly more involved with their local groups and asking for applications.

My second question is that the Portfolio Holder and many Members may recall that when we first set up the Local Spending Boards, that on Local Spending Boards the decision of the Board on the night was the decision. It did not need to go forward to Cabinet. We then for various reasons changed the rules to require what comes to the Spending Board goes forward as a recommendation to Cabinet and I would ask the Portfolio Holder if she would investigate the whole question of bringing the decision-making back to the Local Boards rather than being sent to Cabinet for some sort of ratification. It is the Local Board, its local Members who have looked at that application and who have decided that that is an application they will support and give money from CIL funding. Would she please support taking that back to decision-making within the Local Boards?

Response given by Mrs. K. Randolph

I appreciate very much the points that have been made and I understand that the way in which we are conducting the Spending Boards process this year was decided over a year ago. I am very happy to include in the overall review that I have already spoken about and whether we continue with the recommendations to Cabinet or whether we go back to the actual decisions being made on the night.

Supplementary Question by T. Popham

Can we not, the Administration and the Portfolio Holder, could you not do it under delegated powers. Speak to the opposition and see what they would like and just sort it out. Surely, we don't have to wait until the next Cabinet. We are the Administration, they have the problem, let's help them.

Response given by Mrs. K. Randolph

We have to keep to the process that we have agreed for this year and that we have been working to this year but certainly as far as a review is concerned I will obviously involve Members across the Chamber to decide what is the most effective and useful process in processing the CIL funding.

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54/16 URGENCY DECISIONS

Members noted that there had been no executive or non-executive decisions taken as a matter of urgency since the last meeting of the Council.

55/16 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

The Council considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016-2017. The Annual Report reviewed key activities and achievements and highlighted areas to be taken forward in the new Municipal Year.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, T.G. Oliver, presented the Annual Report. Matters considered by the Committee, its Standing Panel, Working Groups and Task & Finish Groups during 2016/17 were extremely varied. The Committee had focussed on building key local relationships, with the Elmbridge Local Committee, Surrey County Council, Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group and the River Thames Scheme who all attended meetings of the Committee.

Transport and specifically changes to the provision of buses across the Elmbridge area had also been a topic of importance to consider. In addition, focus had been placed on the Council's new Joint Waste Contract and Members received a presentation from the new service provider, Amey in this regard.

Health also remained high on the agenda, with the Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group, as well as NHS Property Services, attending to discuss the Community Hospital Services Review being undertaken, as well as updating on some changes to local surgeries. The Committee was also pleased to receive regular updates on the work of the Elmbridge Local Committee.

The Task and Finish Groups that were established performed specific, issue-based/time-limited reviews, included the Heathrow Task and Finish Group to review the impacts of the proposed airport expansion at Heathrow; and the Enforcement Task and Finish Group to review the enforcement service provided by the Council.

The Performance and Finance Standing Panel had continued to undertake detailed scrutiny of often complex financial and performance information, including affordable homes delivery and homelessness in the Borough, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and planning appeals performance. Detailed consideration of the 2016-2017 budget monitoring reports and the 2017-2018 budget had also been a priority.

Once again, the Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups had undertaken an enormous amount of work, across a number of key areas affecting the Borough and local communities.

T.G. Oliver took the opportunity to thank fellow Members and in particular, Councillor N. Haig-Brown, who had been an effective and committed Vice-

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Chairman. He also thanked the officers for their hard work and contribution to the Committee over the last year.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016-2017, be received.

56/16 REPORTS OF CABINET / COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEE ETC.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendments noted below, the reports of the Cabinet and the following Committees at the meetings held on the dates shown, be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	16 February 2017
APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE	20 February 2017
CABINET	15 March 2017
AUDIT AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE	22 March 2017
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	23 March 2017

Minute No. 62/16 – Enhancement of Car Parks and Repairs to Drewitts Court, Walton-on-Thames

Whilst noting that this matter had been referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the last meeting of the Council, S.J. Selleck commented that he was very happy to support this recommendation.

PLANNING COMMITTEE	28 March 2017
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The meeting commenced at 7.45 pm and concluded at 8.30 pm

MRS. T. SHIPLEY
Mayor

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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
Ms. B. Greenstein	Head of Democratic Services
A. Harrison	Head of Legal Services
Ms. C. Milner	Graduate Management Trainee
Ms. E. Lewis	Sports Development Officer