MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

20 April 2017 at 7.30pm

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor A Alderson) in the chair.


Members of the Council absent: Councillors D A Cotty, T Dicks, Miss M N Heath, Miss D Khalique, P Roberts, Ms C Simmons, P B Tuley and P J Waddell

674 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Mayor read out the Fire Precautions.

675 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Special meeting of the Council and ordinary meeting of the Council held on 2 March 2017 were confirmed and signed as correct records.

676 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cotty, Dicks, Miss Heath, Miss Khalique, Roberts, Tuley and Waddell.

677 MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcements:

- The Mayor’s Charity Ball had raised £15,000 for the Mayoral charities.
- The Mayor had visited the new Sam Beare Hospice at Woking and was highly impressed by its facilities.

678 SPEAKING FROM MEMBERS OF PUBLIC UNDER STANDING ORDER 12

Mr Eastment, who represented approximately 200 people living on Ottershaw Park Estate, had given notice of his wish to speak on the proposed change to Standing Orders 27.3 and 27.4 and Overview and Scrutiny/Crime and Disorder Procedure Rules.

The changes proposed giving the Chief Executive in respect of Standing Orders 27.3 and 27.4 and Corporate Head of Law and Governance in respect of Overview and Scrutiny and Crime and Procedure Rules the discretion, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to decline a request from a Member of the Council to include an item on an agenda if the item
could bring the Council into disrepute, conflicts with the discharge of functions by the Committee or is beyond the legal powers of the Committee to consider.

Mr Eastment expressed concern over the proposed change which he considered would increase Officers powers and reduce the influence of Councillors, and restrict access to information.

Mr Eastment also mentioned two other areas of concern which were planning related, namely i) traveller sites and enforcement of decisions relating thereto, and implications of lack of provision of authorised traveller sites and ii) implications for infrastructure and residents of potential future housing development in various parts of the Borough, namely Ottershaw and Wentworth.

Mr Eastment also considered that communication between the Council and its residents needed to be improved.

Mr Mark French, Secretary of Brox Lane Residents Association in Ottershaw, had also given notice of his wish to speak on the same proposed change to Standing Orders as referred to above.

Mr French expressed his concern over the proposed change to these Standing Orders as he considered it would limit scrutiny of issues by Members and public.

Mr French suggested some changes to the Constitution to improve its clarity, understanding and operation by use of ‘Plain English’. Other changes suggested were extension of the right to all Members of the Council and members of the public to ask for agenda items to be included on the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee agenda, extension of right for members of the public to speak on any item on the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee agenda, video recording of all Committee meetings for subsequent publication on the web, and review of Officer delegation arrangements. Mr French also asked for the Council’s complaints procedure to be reviewed.

Mr French also asked for the establishment of a Sub-Committee to be established under the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee to consider how to improve the reputation of the Planning Department.

The Mayor thanked both speakers for their contributions and advised that the Constitution would be considered later in the meeting and that they were welcome to stay and observe the debate.

679 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

a) Constitution Review

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had been held on 30 March 2017.

Council noted a summary of the proposed changes to the Constitution as recommended by the Corporate Management Committee. The Constitution would come into effect on 17 May 2017, the start of the new Municipal Year.

The Standards and Audit Committee had also made recommendations on property acquisitions/transactions with a view to a greater level of scrutiny and wider Member participation and debate before decisions on those acquisitions/transactions were made in the future. The Standards and Audit Committee had recommended that:
• the Urgent Action Standing Order 42 procedure was only used when necessary for property acquisitions of up to £1m in value which were in line with the Property Investment Strategy.
• all other property transactions be presented to and agreed by Corporate Management Committee, subject to borrowing approval being in place and then be subsequently reported to Full Council, with such proposed transactions to be shown on the electronic despatch of Corporate Management Committee agendas to all Members.
• a generic Property Acquisitions and Asset Management Strategy overview be produced.

The Corporate Management Committee had concurred with all of these recommendations and Full Council endorsed these changes.

The Standards and Audit Committee had also recommended that the Property Sub-Committee be abolished and replaced by a Property and Acquisitions Member Working Group. The Corporate Management Committee had considered this recommendation which included a proposal that Working Group Members should not be Corporate Management Committee Members in order to utilise the skills of Members with property experience who were not Members of the Corporate Management Committee. Having noted that the Runnymede Independents’ Group would be likely to wish to include a Member on this Working Group who was also a Member of the Corporate Management Committee, the Corporate Management Committee had agreed to remove this restriction and this recommendation was considered by Full Council.

Full Council agreed the changes to the Constitution as recommended by Corporate Management Committee with the following amendments:

1. Exclusion of the proposed additional wording giving the Chief Executive in respect of Standing order 27.3 and 27.4 and the Corporate Head of Law and Governance in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee and Crime and Disorder Committee Procedure rules, the discretion in consultation with the Leader of the Council to decline a request from a Member to include an item on an agenda if the item could bring the Council into disrepute, conflicts with discharge of functions by the Committee or is beyond the legal powers of the Committee to consider.

2. The proposed new Property and Acquisitions Member Working Group would not include members of the Corporate Management Committee. Whilst it was noted that the Runnymede Independent Group would be likely to wish to include a Member on this Group who was a member of Corporate Management Committee, it was felt that the exclusion of Corporate Management Committee members was necessary in order to utilise the skills of Members with property experience who were not Members of Corporate Management Committee and to exercise greater scrutiny over property transactions.

RESOLVED that –

i) the changes to the Council’s Constitution as recommended by Corporate Management Committee and reported to Full Council be approved subject to

a) the deletion of the wording giving the Chief Executive in respect of Standing Order 27.3 and 27.4 and the Corporate Head Of Law and Governance in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Select Committee and Crime and Disorder Committee Procedure Rules, the discretion in consultation with the Leader of the Council to decline a request from a Member to include an item on an agenda if the item could bring the Council into disrepute, conflicts with the discharge of functions by the Committee or is beyond the legal powers of the Committee to consider;
b) **exclusion of Corporate Management Committee Members from the proposed Property and Acquisitions Working Group;**

ii) **The Property Investment Strategy be amended as required to reflect the constitutional changes which applied to property transactions;**

iii) **the revised Constitution be effective from 17 May 2017;**

iv) **the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be authorised to settle the final form of the revised Constitution for adoption in accordance with the above decisions, and the Corporate Head of Law and Governance be authorised to incorporate any delegations to Officers subsequently authorised by Committee(s) after 30 March 2017 and prior to printing, and make any minor editing changes necessary to correct errors or omissions discussed after 17 May 2017; and**

v) **the Member Working Group review the Constitution in the early part of the next Municipal Year to consider any suggestions Members may wish to make on the Constitution in advance of the next review of the Constitution which will commence in October this year.**

b) **8 Station Road North – Egham Gateway Development – Procurement Of Refurbishment Contractor**

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had been held on 30 March 2017.

**RESOLVED that –**

i) **a revised capital estimate in the sum reported be approved for the refurbishment of 8 Station Road North; and**

ii) **the company recommended in the report that had achieved the highest total tender score be appointed as contractors.**

c) **Runnymede Regeneration Programme – Redevelopment of 168 High Street, Egham**

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had been held on 30 March 2017.

**RESOLVED that –**

i) **option 3, as set out in the report, be pursued;**

ii) **a revised capital estimate in the sum reported (including a contingency in the sum reported) be agreed for the improvement and refurbishment of 168 High Street, Egham; and**

iii) **the residential accommodation be subject to a lease to RBC Investments (Surrey) Limited for the time period reported.**

d) **Egham Gateway Development – Phase One – Acquisition of Land**
The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had been held on 30 March 2017.

RESOLVED that –

i) the Council proceeds with the purchase of the land outlined in the report; and

ii) a supplementary capital estimate be approved in the sum reported for the purchase of the land to be taken from the provision for future land purchases held in the Capital Programme.

(The meeting ended at 8.02pm)                             Mayor