

10 SEPTEMBER 2018

PLACE-MAKING AND INNOVATION EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

10 September 2018

- * Councillor Nils Christiansen (Chairman)
- * Councillor Angela Goodwin (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Alexandra Chesterfield | Councillor Julia McShane |
| * Councillor David Elms | Councillor Dennis Paul |
| * Councillor Andrew Gomm | * Councillor Mike Piper |
| * Councillor Liz Hogger | * Councillor David Quelch |
| * Councillor Jennifer Jordan | * Councillor Jenny Wicks |

* Present

Councillors Matt Furniss, Nikki Nelson-Smith and Tony Rooth were also in attendance.

PMI1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Julia McShane. Councillor Caroline Reeves attended as a substitute for Councillor Julia McShane.

PMI2 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

PMI3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board held on 9 April 2018 were agreed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

PMI4 STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY: UPDATED POLICY INCLUDING CHARGING PROPOSALS AND PUBLIC SIGNAGE CONSULTATION

The Council had statutory functions under Sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Public Health Act 1925 for the naming of streets within the Borough and for the numbering of houses and other buildings in the Borough under Sections 64 and 65 of the Town Improvement Clauses Act 1847.

The Board considered a report which set out the background to the proposed Street Naming and Numbering (SNN) policy and charging proposal together with options for new Borough wide standard street signs to be considered for all new signage. The report consulted the Board prior to public consultation on the proposals which would inform final recommendations to the Executive for a decision in autumn 2018.

The policy included a proposal to charge fees for certain types of work currently undertaken for commercial organisations without any form of cost recovery by the Council. It was expected this change, if adopted, would generate income of approximately £30,000 per annum to offset the costs of the services. Fees were already levied by other councils in Surrey for these services and this proposal would align the Council with those authorities.

Appended to the report for information was a Street Nameplate Maintenance Operational Change Proposal, which had been agreed by the Council's Corporate Management Team, to transfer non-ICT tasks related to SNN to more appropriate service areas of the Council.

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The report recommended that the ICT Manager, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Infrastructure and Governance, undertake a public consultation incorporating feedback from the Board and report the outcome of the consultations and recommendations in respect of the policy, charges and signage to the Executive for a decision regarding final approval of the scheme. This would provide policy and standards in respect of statutory functions relating to SNN in the interests of the efficient administration of public services.

The Board was advised that the SNN Policy provided a clear and transparent framework for SNN and enabled the Council to defend against poor or inappropriate naming and challenges. The proposed new automated electronic process would improve efficiency and effectiveness of the SNN service and reduce costs. There were currently three types of sign format across the Borough and the Board was invited to indicate a preference from the two options proposed for the new standard signs which would bring consistency. Option 1 was signage in the Kindersley font with the Borough crest and branding, town / parish name and postcode whilst Option 2 was plain signage in transport heavy font with the postcode. Option 1 offered a positive sense of place and identity for the Borough. The public consultation, which would include the local Access Group, would give the public an opportunity to express their views in respect of the signage and engage with the process. It was considered necessary for the Council to recover its signage costs, which would increase in the event of proposed new developments taking place.

The following points arose as a result of questions and discussion in respect of the SNN Policy:

- The 14 calendar day consultation period for consultees to respond to a proposed street name was set in legislation and failure to respond within that timeframe could lead to a default acceptance of a street name. Ward Councillors would be involved and there would be merit in amenity groups and residents' associations being included as consultees.
- The town or relevant parish name with postcode would be utilised for Option 1 signage and this should be made clear during the public consultation.
- The Council was not permitted to derive a profit through the SNN Policy.
- All new signs would be the agreed option and existing signs would be replaced on a rolling basis as required unless there were name or boundary changes. Without damage, the life of a street sign could be as long as 50 years and there were historic signs in Guildford town centre.
- The customers of the SNN Policy were mainly developers, the Post Office emergency services and occasionally householders wishing to change house names.
- The proposed new electronic process would be automated as far as possible and feature a filtering tool to weed out inappropriate names. Parish clerks should be notified of proposed names as part of the process
- All relevant bodies had been consulted in respect of the SNN Policy. 28 days was the statutory consultation period regarding the charging policy and it was suggested that this be extended to involve more potential consultees.
- The street signs would require specialist manufacturing through a joint contract with Waverley Borough Council.
- The Board expressed its support for the proposed SNN Policy with an extended consultation period and expressed a preference for Option 1 signage. It was suggested that the Borough branding be deleted from this option and there was mixed support for the option with or without the branding.

PMI5 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

As the Board did not discuss Appendix 4 of the report at agenda item 9 (Street Naming and Numbering Policy: Updated Policy Including Charging Proposals and Public Signage

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Consultation), which contained commercially sensitive information, it did not become necessary to exclude the press and public from the meeting.

PMI6 STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY: UPDATED POLICY INCLUDING CHARGING PROPOSALS AND PUBLIC SIGNAGE CONSULTATION

Appendix 4 to the above report, which provided indicative signage costs, was noted.

PMI7 RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS AND ALTERATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The EAB was invited to consider and comment on the draft Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2018 following the associated public consultation and to make recommendations as appropriate to the Executive.

The SPD was a key design document that could assist with providing advice to applicants and raising the standard and quality of design in householder alterations and applications. Although the document was not part of the Development Plan, it added further detail to the policies contained in the Plan and was a material consideration in making planning decisions. Clear design policy could provide a useful tool for officers and Councillors in planning assessment and decision-making and for providing advice to applicants, to help raise design standards and avoid poor quality planning applications. It was important that any design guidance was clear, current and fit for purpose.

The consultation document had been downloaded from the Council's website on 900 occasions and 27 comprehensive, lengthy and useful consultation responses had been received. All the 27 responses had been taken into account in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and the EAB received a summary of the key issues arising from them together with the related officer responses. The more general responses concerned document size, accessibility, colour and the increased use of local photographic examples of exemplary and award winning design. Other policy documents covered some of the technical planning issues raised such as side windows, flat roofs and the minimum build distance of 1 metre from the boundary, the acceptability of which depended on the local context. Although parking standards, including dimensions, were due for review, they were not included in this SPD. The consultation exercise had included internal consultation with all relevant service areas and two design workshops with the Planning Committee. The document was available in printed and on-line versions.

In response to discussion, questions and comments arising from consideration of the SPD, the following points were noted / agreed:

- The reference to Neighbourhood Plans on page 4 of the SPD would be highlighted and strengthened including identification of the areas with such Plans in place.
- Although dark skies were not a planning issue, a further SPD being prepared would address light spillage. Individual situations and areas would dictate acceptability.
- Alternatives to the 45 degree guide applied to windows serving habitable rooms would be added to the document.
- An explanation of balcony roof lights, which would generally be resisted owing to their impact on privacy, would be added to the document.
- Photographs in the document would be referenced and enlarged in the interests of clarity.
- Developers were encouraged to provide larger sized garages in new developments to house bins etc.
- The boundary treatment section on page 38 would be expanded on the subject of fence height and style.

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- The formatting of the on-line version of the SPD should be adjusted to ensure improved on screen readability.
- Although it was a fundamental planning principle that extensions were subservient to the original property by being set back with long roofscapes, exceptions were acceptable where appropriate.
- Approximately 85% of local authorities and other planning organisations nationally had design guidance in place which was similar to the SPD.
- The SPD carried considerable weight and was a material consideration in determining planning applications owing the associated consultation and compatibility with other planning policy documents including the Strategic Development Framework which addressed the wider master planning of strategic development sites.
- The timetable for progressing planning policies was initial consultation with stakeholders commencing shortly and completing in November 2018 leading to reports coming forward in January / February 2019 and consultation documents prepared by March 2019.

PM18 FUTURE USE OF FOXENDEN DEEP SHELTER

The Property Surveyor gave a presentation introducing a report seeking guidance from the Board concerning the future use of Foxenden Deep Shelter. The presentation explained the background to the Deep Shelter; provided a location map of the site; included photographs of Allen House Grounds, the Shelter and entrances to the Shelter from the adjoining car park; and outlined issues, the proposal, the process and points to consider.

This guidance was sought as a result of interest expressed by a company in taking a lease of the Shelter for whisky maturation and occasional trade tastings. The Shelter, which was constructed in 1941 and consisted of approximately 230 metres of 2½ - 3 metre high tunnels located 15 metres beneath Allen House Grounds, was formerly opened to the public on heritage days but closed in 2010 on safety grounds. There were various works required to make the Shelter suitable for public access and the cost of the works combined with management costs could not be justified to allow infrequent public access.

Allen House Grounds were gifted to the Council in 1914 and the Shelter was subject to the same restrictive legal covenants and charitable status as the Grounds. These restrictions included sole use as public gardens and pleasure grounds and also a prohibition on the sale, production and consumption of alcohol and could only be modified or removed if the Charity Commission approved an application for this purpose. The Charity Commission's approval would also need to be obtained for the grant of a lease of the Shelter. Any disposal must achieve best consideration and be in the best interests of the Charity. Prior to submitting the application to the Charity Commission, a 4 week public consultation in respect of the proposals must be undertaken.

The Council was the sole charitable trustee of the Shelter and Grounds and the Executive had delegated related decision-making to the Executive Shareholder and Trustee Committee. Following completion of the public consultation, the outcome of the consultation must be reported to the Committee and a decision must be taken by the Committee as to whether to proceed with the application to the Charity Commission. The process was likely to be lengthy.

If the Trust proceeded with an application to the Charity Commission then the application would be either to remove the restrictions on alcohol and use entirely or amend them so they did not apply to the Shelter. The Council's Parks and Leisure Services favoured the removal of the restrictions to enable events to take place on the Grounds.

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Regardless of whether the Trust proceeded with a disposal of the Shelter, it may be necessary to address the structural issues. Any expenditure incurred by the Council on the Shelter must be treated as charity expenditure on behalf of the Trust and accounted for accordingly. Equally, any income received from leasing the Shelter must be used for the benefit of the Trust. An incoming tenant may agree to undertake the required works in return for a rent free period and there may be grant funding available from external funders to cover or contribute to the cost of works. If the Trust proceeded with an application to the Charity Commission and this application was successful then the likelihood of being able to obtain a tenant increased, thereby creating a potential income stream for the Trust.

The following points arose from questions and discussion regarding the Shelter:

- A public consultation would inform the Council of the level of public interest in the future use of the Shelter.
- Pride in the heritage of the Borough was expressed and it was suggested that the tunnels should be strengthened and enhanced as a tourist attraction which could generate income in the future. The Shelter had been a popular tourist attraction when previously opened to the public on heritage days.
- Current costs for pursuing the proposal to remove / modify the covenants and seek a tenant related to officer time associated with the consultation and committee process. However, in order to make the Shelter usable, there would be significant expenditure required on items relating to health and safety, improving ventilation and providing lighting. Historic estimates costed these works at around £20,000. There were also works required to replace load bearing steel beams in the Shelter, which could be in the region of £50,000. Further advice was awaited on the extent of work required and the likely cost.
- Legal advice had confirmed that the restrictive covenants affecting the Grounds also applied to the tunnels below.

The Board indicated its support for the Committee to authorise the undertaking of a public consultation concerning the removal of the restrictive covenants and the grant of a lease of the Shelter and wished to have input into the potential alternative future uses of the Shelter, possibly including a heritage element.

PMI9 COUNCILLOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PREPARATION OF THE BUDGET

The Board was reminded that in September 2016 and July 2017 both Executive Advisory Boards (EABs) had agreed to establish a politically balanced Joint EAB Budget Task Group, comprising four councillors appointed by each EAB. The terms of reference of the Budget Task Group were to consider and review for submission to the EABs, Executive and Council:

- (1) the draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account revenue budgets, and
- (2) the draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes, including growth bids to inform the evaluation process.

For 2018-19, each EAB was requested, once again, to appoint four councillors who, together, would comprise the Budget Task Group. The Board agreed to continue with this arrangement and appoint three Conservative members and one Liberal Democrat member.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Alexandra Chesterfield, Colin Cross, Mike Piper and David Quelch be appointed to the Joint EAB Budget Task Group for 2018-19.

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Reason for Decision:

To ensure backbench councillor involvement in the budget setting process.

PMI10 PROGRESS WITH ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE EAB

Progress with items previously considered by the Board were noted.

PMI11 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

As the Board's Work Programme had been updated at the EAB / Overview and Scrutiny Work Programming meeting which had taken place after the despatch of the agenda for this meeting, an updated Work Programme was circulated at the meeting. The Board agreed that future plans and progress for town centre regeneration and for the future use of Foxenden Deep Shelter be added to its Work Programme.

The meeting finished at 9.12 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman