

**MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE POLICY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2024**

- * Councillor Follows – Chair
- * Councillor Weightman – Vice Chair

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| * Councillor Adam | * Councillor Holliday |
| 0 Councillor Clayton | * Councillor Kiehl |
| 0 Councillor Crooks | * Councillor Martin |
| 0 Councillor Crowe | * Councillor PMA Rivers |
| 0 Councillor C Downey | * Councillor Steel |
| 0 Councillor S Downey | * Councillor Thomson |
| * Councillor Duce | * Councillor Williams |
| * Councillor Heagin | |

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

259. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 August 2024, having been previously circulated were signed by the Chair as a true record.

260. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

261. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

Members made no declarations of interest in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting, which is required to be disclosed by the Localism Act 2011 and the Godalming Members' Code of Conduct.

262. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No petitions/statements/questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order No 4.

263. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions from Councillors were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 6.

264. ACCOUNTS PAID SINCE LAST MEETING & SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Due to the absence of the Finance Officer the data was not downloaded for this meeting, as such this item was deferred and will be brought back to the next meeting of this committee.

265. BUDGET MONITORING

Members considered and noted the budget monitoring report to 31 August 2024 (detailed report attached to record minutes). Members raised no questions in relation to the report.

266. COMMITTEE REPORTS & KEY DATES

Members noted the list of external representatives erroneously includes the Godalming Museum Trust, which is now represented via the Museum Co-ordination Group. The Town Clerk was requested to update the list to reflect this change.

267. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

Members welcomed the fact that Waverley Borough Council has published a Community Asset Transfer Policy, which will now allow GTC to explore options within a known framework and criteria.

The policy set out a transparent and consistent approach by which Waverley Borough Council is able to assess the benefits of any expression of interest, including from GTC, for the transfer of assets owned or under the stewardship of Waverley Borough Council.

Members noted that Godalming Town Council has previously indicated that it might wish to consider options for the transfer of public assets from Waverley to the Town Council and that Parts 1.3, 2.1 & 2.2 of the Corporate Plan support the devolution of assets from WBC to GTC and Action Point 13 states that the Council should:

“Assess formally any opportunities for managing land currently held by Waverley Borough Council (as full freehold transfers) including, but not limited to:

- a. The Burys Field*
- b. The Crown Court (including the landholding at the Public Toilets)*
- c. Land at the Wilfrid Noyce & Land + at the Scout HQ building*
- d. Canon Bowring Field.”*

Members also noted that to be able to take any request for the transfer of assets forward GTC would need to establish a robust business case for each asset and that there is potentially both legal and financial implications to GTC associated with each asset transfer. As such, Members acknowledged that it is imperative that a clear purpose, which shows positive benefits to residents and from which a business case can be established, exists before GTC proceeds with any expression of interest.

However, Members also noted the opportunities available and as demonstrated in many other communities, there can undoubtedly be a clear public benefit from some assets being managed locally. This could be by creating a more purposeful sense of place through community ownership and responsibility, or that more local management can make better public use of the asset. Either way, it is the benefit opportunity that should be the key driver.

Members agreed that the first step in the process is to determine the priority order for submitting any formal expression of interest. If successful at that stage, this would then progress to the submission of a business case. In creating a business case, each expression of interest would require not only Members' engagement in establishing and articulating the community benefit, but also significant investment in Officers' time. Members noted that at this stage, GTC may need to seek additional, temporary resource to assist in the process and that this would be determined through the normal staffing committee process.

In considering assets that might be suitable for transfer from WBC to GTC, Members agreed the following priority order:

- i. The Burys Field – As the main event field for the Town, Members considered that The Bury's Field should logically be managed by Godalming Town Council; the Town Council already holds the regulated entertainment licence and has the capacity to manage the land asset.

- ii. Canon Bowring Field – Members have expressed a view that a case could be made that the Canon Bowring Field, which was originally gifted to the former Borough of Godalming for the use of local children by Canon Bowring, should be returned to as local a level as possible.
- iii. Lammas Land adjacent to Bridge Gate House – Members have long wished to be able to extend the Meadow allotments onto the Lammas Land adjacent to Bridge Gate House (although it should be noted that as registered common land any transfer would require Secretary of State approval).
- iv. “Charterhouse Green” – Due to the complexity of issues relating to common land consent and easement rights the option to transfer “Charterhouse Green” is likely to be more complicated. As such Members agreed this should be lower down the list.
- v. Freehold of The Burys Scout HQ and the Wilfrid Noyce Centre – As the ownership of the freehold currently has little material effect on the services or activities delivered from those locations, Members agreed that these assets should be a medium-term ambition.

Governance Journey:

In agreeing a priority order Members noted the next stage would be for the Town Clerk to work up the Community Asset Transfer Expression of Interest Forms.

As land and property acquisition or disposal is a reserved power, it will be for Full Council to approve any expression of interest before submission. Members suggested that at the appropriate time Full Council then delegate to P&M the approval of the writing of any subsequent business case and the approval of resource to assist in doing so and to cover legal or other professional fees.

If a transfer progresses, any subsequent Heads of Terms must be agreed by Full Council before any final agreement is brought forward.

268. OCKFORD PARK COMMUNITY BUILDING

On 15 February 2024 Members resolved to accept the Heads of Terms and authorised the Town Clerk to arrange for the legal transfer of the Ockford Park community building to Godalming Town Council. (Min No 516-23 refers). Subsequently on 9 May Members nominated Cllr Thomson and WBC Cllr Victoria Kiehl to be the representatives (alongside the Town Clerk) to work with WBC and other parties to seek to determine the details necessary for establishing a suitable community support hub at the Ockford Park community building (Min No 646-23 refers).

Members were informed that having held an initial scoping meeting with representatives from a number of agencies, a follow-up meeting was held on 11 September at the premises to seek to create a template for community benefit use. This meeting was attended by representatives from GTC, WBC, SCC, Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board, Central Surrey Health, The Mill Medical Practice, CASWS, HomeStart Waverley and St Marks & All Saints CofE Primary School.

Members were also informed that due to delays in the legal process required to affect the transfer from the developers to GTC, the earliest realistic date for start of use of the building would be January 2025.

Members agreed that whilst the building provides a superb opportunity for GTC to work in partnership with a number of organisations to create a ‘community hub’ for the local area, due to factors such as the parking constraints and proximity to residential properties, not all activities will be suitable for the venue. Members also noted that the aim is to introduce new

activities and services into the area as opposed to existing activities provided at other venues in the Aarons Hill/Ockford Ridge area relocating from one place to another.

In general Members agreed the building is best suited for use between 0830 and 1830 with any evening activities being by exception and then primarily sedentary activities. Members agreed that as GTC wishes to support the health and well-being of the local community, statutory and charitable organisations offering health and well-being services would be able to make use of the building, with GTC seeking to cover fixed costs through weekend hire for children's birthday parties etc. and some weekdays' hire for suitable clubs and societies etc.

Members were informed that Officers are hoping to establish a timetable for use covering two sessions per day (14 session per week). Additionally, once an opening date is known GTC's Community & Communications Officer will start to promote the building for weekend use and for utilisation of any spare capacity.

Members agreed that as with its other community buildings, GTC will need to provide the basic fit out of tables, chairs, crockery & cutlery, white boards, pin boards, storage cupboards etc.

Members also agreed that whilst the transfer of the building is at no cost to GTC, once the transfer is complete, GTC becomes liable for operating costs, which will include non-domestic business rates, utilities, estate service charge, waste removal and cleaning. Members noted that at present the cost of the business rates is unknown until the VOA has completed a valuation as a community centre. As such rates, along with other costs can at this stage only be best estimates based on costs experienced at GTC's other community buildings, which come out at approximately £11,000 per annum, with, income based on one weekend session hire per week projected at approx. £4,000, therefore an estimated cost to GTC for providing a community health & well-being hub is in the region of £7,000.

Members resolved to approve expenditure of up to £7,500 for the fitting out of the new building. Additionally, Members authorised expenditure to cover the operating costs of the building for the remainder of 2024/25 estimated at £3,500. Both fit-out and in-year operational costs plus a 10% contingency of £1,100 to be funded from the Emerging Projects Fund which currently stands at £47,500.

Members agreed that the estimated income and expenditure costs from 2025/26 should be built into the base budget with the Ockford Park community building becoming a new cost centre.

Naming of the Building

Members agreed that the Members for Ockford & Central should bring forwards suggestions for consideration.

269. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT LOAN FACILITY

Members noted that the loan facility agreed on 11 January 2024 of up to £20,000 for the Godalming Business Improvement District (BID) board in advance of first payment from WBC to enable the setting up of the company (Min No 455-23 refers) has been repaid in full.

Members requested the Chair write to the BID and invite the BID Manager to a future meeting to outline the BID's plans.

270. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) – YOUTH PROVISION

Members noted the authority authorised at the 16 February 2023 Full Council for the delivery arrangements for the UKSPF to be delegated to the Town Clerk, RFO & Youth Services

Officer, in consultation with the Youth Service Management Group and the Staffing Committee as appropriate to their terms of reference, with any decisions or commitments being within the funding allocation of the UKSPF and in accordance with the requirements of the UKSPF, including procurement, financial, branding, publicity and reporting regulations (Min No 508-23 refers).

Members noted that following the receipt of the Youth Services' Annual Report and subsequent discussions with the Youth Services Officer, alongside consultations with the Chairs of P&M and Staffing, a second-hand electric vehicle (EV) was purchased for £3,495 to provide youth workers with the opportunity to deliver detached youth work at locations unsuitable for the larger activity vehicle.

271. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND – CROWN COURT PUBLIC

Members noted that the refurbished Crown Court public toilets were opened for use on the 19 September 2024 by the Mayor, Cllr Paul Rivers. Members were informed that all funds due from the Community Ownership Fund have been received and that the Town Clerk has completed the project monitoring and exit report. Members noted the requirement for GTC to provide audited accounts of expenditure within 6 months of the end of the grant funding period (by 21 March 2025) and that on the advice of the Locum RFO, the Council's Internal Auditor should be requested to confirm monies received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government were allocated and spent on the project.

272. TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL BODIES

On the proposal of Cllr Kiehl, seconded by Cllr Follows, the following Councillors were nominated to represent GTC on the WBC's Broadwater Park Project Working Group:

Cllr Thomson
Cllr Adam
Cllr C Downey

Members agreed the nominations.

273. COMMUNICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Members identified no items from this meeting to be publicised

274. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy & Management Committee is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 17 October 2024 at 7.00pm or at the conclusion of the preceding Environment & Planning Committee meeting, whichever is later.

275. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

IN PURSUANCE OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 S.1(2), THE COMMITTEE RESOLVED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC AND PRESS FROM THE MEETING AT THIS POINT PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEM(S) 18 BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED I.E STAFFING MATTERS.

276. STAFFING MATTERS

The Chair of the Staffing Committee informed Members of an appointment to the vacant Finance Officer position and that the new incumbent will be in post early January 2025.

The Chair of Staffing also updated Members on the outcome of the Youth Service Review. Members noted the SWOT analysis for the service and the recommendation to mitigate an identified weakness and delivery risk. Members resolved to agree the dis-establishment of the existing Youth Services Officer position and the creation of two new positions – Youth Services Manager and Youth Development Officer, both positions to be based on professional JNC qualified youth worker grades.

Members resolved to approve the funding for the restructure and recruitment, with in-year costs to be met from within the existing salary budget and for an increase of 1.09% in the 2025/26 salary to cover the future full-year costs.