

## PLACE MAKING AND INNOVATION EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

1 June 2020

- \* Councillor Angela Gunning (Chairman)
- \* Councillor Gordon Jackson (Vice-Chairman)

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| Councillor Jon Askew             | * Councillor Steven Lee    |
| * Councillor Christopher Barrass | * Councillor Masuk Miah    |
| * Councillor Ruth Brothwell      | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| Councillor Graham Eyre           | * Councillor Will Salmon   |
| * Councillor Diana Jones         | Councillor Patrick Sheard  |

\* Present

Councillors Jan Harwood, Julia McShane, Ramsey Nagaty, Tony Rooth and James Steel were also in attendance.

### **PMI1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jon Askew and Patrick Sheard.

Councillors George Potter and Catherine Young were present as substitutes for Councillors Jon Askew and Patrick Sheard, respectively.

### **PMI2 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Councillors Diana Jones, Steven Lee, George Potter, Maddy Redpath and James Steel declared non-pecuniary interests in agenda item number 5 owing to their involvement with the Plastic Free Guildford residents' group.

### **PMI3 MINUTES**

Subject to the substitution of the word 'generally' for the word 'strongly' in the first bullet point of the Chairman's summary of the main views expressed by the Board contained in minute number PMI28 concerning Regulation 18 Consultation on Local Plan: Development Management Policies to read: 'The scope of the proposed policies and the strength of their links to issues related to climate change, biodiversity and protection were generally supported.', the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 17 February 2020 were confirmed and would be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

However, some concerns were expressed regarding the use of draft minutes to convey the Board's views to the Council at its meeting held on 5 May 2020 and the capture of all points made at the last EAB meeting by members and non-members. The Board was advised that as its following meeting scheduled for 6 April 2020 had been cancelled owing to the Coronavirus pandemic, there had not been an opportunity for it to approve its minutes before they were used to report views to the Council meeting. The Board was reminded that minutes were not intended to be verbatim records of meetings and that the forward focus should be on capturing the essence of views expressed and reaching agreement in respect of advisory points to be forwarded to the Executive or Council for consideration.

### **PMI4 DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE, SUSTAINABLE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

Councillors considered a note which briefed the Board on the draft Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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appended to the note and invited its comments on the draft document for consideration by officers as part of the related consultation process. The note described the background, scope and role of the SPD and set out the process and next steps.

The Policy Officer – Planning Policy gave a presentation to introduce and explain the SPD. The presentation covered Development Plan Documents (DPDs), the difference between DPDs and SPDs, Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 policies addressed by this SPD, and the aims of this SPD together with an outline of the Sustainable Design and Construction Guide forming part of it.

The SPD was closely aligned to Local Plan Policies and covered Policy D2: Climate Change, Sustainable Design, Construction and Energy; Policy D1: Place shaping (paragraphs 2 and 10); and Policy P4: Flooding, flood risk and groundwater protection zones (paragraph 5).

Policy D2 consisted of sections relating to climate change adaptation, energy, and design and construction. It featured principles set out in energy and waste hierarchies whilst requiring submissions in respect of sustainable design and construction / climate change adaptation, and of low carbon energy / carbon emissions in relation to major and non-major developments.

Policy D1 required all new development to perform positively against 'Building for Life' guidance whilst meeting industry standards for new design, limited coverage of energy efficiency and efficient use of natural resources to maximise passive solar gain.

Prioritisation for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) relating to surface water management and mitigation of heavy rainfall events were required under Policy P4.

The aims of the SPD were to encourage compliance with policy, ensure an improved decision-making process and achieve better development outcomes. There were six sections of the SPD which were an introduction, summary of policy, overview of information that must be submitted in support of planning applications, energy statements (major development), sustainability statements (major development) and requirements for non-major developments.

The Sustainable Design and Construction Guide aligned content with policy, provided guidance on best design and construction practice, and was based on guidance from reputable bodies and internal practitioners. The Guide covered an energy hierarchy; site layout; landscaping and urban form; building design; water efficiency; climate change adaptation; measures that enabled sustainable lifestyles; resources, materials and waste; and building for life.

The following points arose from related questions, comments and discussion:

- In terms of abbreviations in the SPD, it was clarified that SAP was an acronym for the Standard Assessment Procedure which was the methodology used by the Government to assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings and SBEM was an abbreviation for the Simplified Building Energy Model which was a tool developed to provide an analysis of a building's energy consumption. Developers were required to provide the latter to meet the Building Regulations. The relevant industries were familiar with both acronyms.
- It was suggested that wood chip fired combined heat and power (CHP) systems may no longer be an environmentally acceptable power source owing to the carbon dioxide impact of felling mature trees and burning wood and the shortage of wood chip nationally necessitating import from abroad. The use of photovoltaic solar roof tiles / panels was suggested as an alternative.

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- In terms of developers' submission requirements, officers would refer to Policy D2 to ascertain whether the requirements had been met, and if not, the necessary information would be sought. The requirements for smaller developments, of ten homes or fewer, was less stringent.
- In addition to being a consultee in respect of all future SPDs, councillors expressed a wish for the Board to receive the related statements of public consultation responses to give it an opportunity to comment on those and the final draft document prior to their submission to the Executive.
- 30 responses had been received in respect of the SPD public consultation which was an average amount for this type of technical document. The responses, many of which were from industry, were valuable and had been published on the Council's website on 1 June 2020.
- As it was felt that the majority of references in the SPD were to new development, it was suggested that some guidance concerning conversion of existing premises, such as the conversion of offices and retail units to homes, should be included.
- Although the impact of Coronavirus could bring about societal changes with future implications for planning policies, the intention was that current policies would be adhered to until the evidence base and / or Government guidance changed.
- It was suggested that the introduction of a reward scheme may encourage developers to comply with all requirements and standards.
- The SPD needed to specify that developments should provide space for charging electric vehicles and accommodating car clubs.
- Conditions could be imposed on planning permissions to ensure that developments met the energy efficiency requirements specified in the related planning applications and policies could allow post construction inspections as a means of establishing whether developments had achieved compliance with energy requirements. However, inspections and follow up enforcement action to secure compliance were resource intensive and not pursued by many councils. Research released by the Government found that new buildings were generally failing to meet the energy and carbon standards set out in Building Regulations once built (the 'performance gap'). Some research suggested that new buildings as built may perform up to 60% worse than as designed, and it was anticipated that the Government would be introducing a new compliance approach in Building Regulations. The Board felt that the Executive should be made aware of the need to make resources available for officers to undertake the necessary enforcement work in this area.

As summarised by the Chairman, the main views expressed by the Board as its consultation response for officers to consider as part of the related SPD consultation process, which would be fed back to the Executive for consideration, were as follows:

- References to energy sources in the SPD should be broadened to include types of low carbon networks other than CHP to maintain flexibility as alternative and more effective low carbon technologies became available for use.
- Requirements for energy efficiency and carbon emission in respect of property conversions in addition to new build should be included in the SPD.
- The SPD should specify that new developments should make provision for electric vehicle charging and car clubs.
- The Board should receive statements of public consultation responses in respect of future SPDs prior to their submission to the Executive.
- Resources should be made available for the post construction inspection and enforcement of energy efficiency standards, including small developments of ten or fewer properties.

**PMI5 PLASTICS FREE GUILDFORD**

The Interim Head of Asset Management (Climate Change Lead) gave a presentation concerning initiatives to implement a plastic free Guildford policy as an explanatory introduction to her related report which invited the EAB to consider the actions taken to date to reduce the use and impact of non-recyclable Single Use Plastics (SUPs) and recommend a way forward for the Council to undertake further work towards a plastic free Guildford and in doing so, help to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan priority to protect the environment.

The presentation covered the national framework and local commitment relating to reducing the use of SUPs, the Council's achievements to date, the role of the Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP), other councils' approaches and the recommended way forward.

The national framework consisted of the UK's 25 Year Environment Plan which was published by the Government in January 2018 with a target to achieve zero avoidable plastic waste by the end of 2042, and the Waste and Resources Strategy 2018-19 published by DEFRA and setting out ambitious plans for a greener future with financial incentives.

On 23 July 2019 the Council adopted a motion recognising the damage plastics could cause to the environment and committed the authority to working with local communities to reduce the negative impact of the use of SUPs in so far as it was reasonable to do so. The Council asked that this EAB make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Executive on how to achieve each of the seven commitments set out in the motion. The Council's commitment was to work to reduce the use of non-recyclable SUPs as announced on 23 July 2019 to play its part in delivering the SEP's SUP Strategy (2018) and 5-year action plan, reduce the impact through use of SUPs and support, promote and encourage plastic free initiatives and events within the Borough.

The Council asked that this EAB make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Executive on how to achieve each of the seven points (a) to (g) below:

- a. Avoid Council use of SUPs.
- b. Encourage local businesses to avoid use of SUPs.
- c. Engage with and support the Plastic Free Guildford Group.
- d. Work with suppliers to discourage use of avoidable SUPs.
- e. Support local communities to reduce the use of SUPs.
- f. Support the national water refill campaign.
- g. Work with partners to investigate effective and sustainable incentives for the return of SUPs for recycling.

In terms of achieving the Council's commitments to date, examples included the cessation of some plastic use, communication with residents and businesses and community engagement, caterer's packaging constructed from recyclable materials, newly installed water bottle refilling stations and supporting staff to recycle more waste.

The twelve Surrey councils within the SEP came together and created a SUP Strategy for Surrey, the primary objective of which was to avoid producing plastic waste. The Strategy featured a five year plan and an ambition for residents to: "live in clean, safe and green communities, where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities". The four themes of the Strategy were councils' tackling their own plastic use, working with their suppliers and contractors, raising awareness across Surrey and supporting the county to take action. Each theme had a set of objectives and outputs.

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There was a SUP Task Group which had agreed a mix of good practice and measurable targets with dates to aim for. Guildford Borough officers were involved and attended Task Group meetings.

The Output Action Classification target sought to group SUP items into the level of difficulty to eliminate e.g. easy, moderate or hard. The easy category consisted of plastic drink bottles and cups, plastic food takeaway boxes, plastic cutlery, plastic grocery bags, straws, stirrers, sauce sachets and tea bags with plastic wrappers. The moderate group covered hot drink cups and lids, coffee capsules and stationery. The hard category consisted of bin bags, food wrappers, yogurt pots, milk bottles, composite food packaging (e.g: chocolate boxes, biscuit trays, crisp bags, soup containers), cleaning supplies (e.g: washing-up fluid, other cleaning fluids and wet wipes), food packaging film, and protective packaging for fragile items etc. The target date for eliminating the easy and moderate groupings had been December 2019 whilst that for the hard group was December 2023.

An example of a SUP theme objective and output was SUP Objective 1: End the sale and provision of SUP products in order to phase out the use of SUPs across the Council's estates and operations wherever possible.

The SUP Strategy for Surrey featured a collaborative approach in respect of the best way to tackle SUPs, commitment to eliminating SUPs in the county governed by the SEP with joint policy objectives. The Strategy contained good practice guidance for authorities and a Five-Year Action Plan which each authority could customise for its own approach.

Other Councils' initiatives included producing their own SUP policy and pledges and/or action plans, endorsing the SUPs Strategy for Surrey and providing public information or guidance on their websites.

Officers proposed the preparation of a new Guildford SUP Action Plan for approval by the Executive, implementation of the four SUP Strategy for Surrey themes and co-ordination of a small number of Council officers to assist with progressing the work. The Action Plan would enable this EAB to make structured and planned recommendations to the Executive on how to progress the seven commitments.

Going forward, the Board was invited to discuss and consider actions taken to date to reduce the impact of SUPs and the recommendation to formulate a new Guildford SUP Action Plan for the Executive to approve.

The following points and comments arose from related questions and discussion:

- Having thanked officers for the work undertaken since the passing of the plastic free Guildford motion, a councillor drew attention to the omission of one element of the motion, the purpose of which had been for Guildford to obtain certification as a plastic free Borough working in conjunction with the Plastic Free Guildford Group and the community. The Interim Head of Asset Management undertook to ascertain progress in this regard and report back to the Board.
- Although there were Government guidelines concerning the reduction of plastic waste in the Government's estate, the Interim Head of Asset Management confirmed that she was unaware of any such guidelines, indicators or metrics determining what reduction of plastic waste was expected from local government. However, the use of the Surrey SUP Action Plan as a framework to formulate a new Guildford SUP Action Plan would steer the way forward. The Board reflected on the enormity of the task to resolve reduction of plastic across local communities, and its suggestion that the provision of

further resources would be necessary to support a wider plastic initiative, was welcomed.

- There was some concern that efforts to reduce SUPs had focused on operations at the Council's Millmead House offices whilst there was a need for both Borough and co-ordinated Surrey-wide campaigns to engage the public and encourage behavioural change to tackle SUPs. It was suggested that the relevant recommendation be strengthened to reflect this.
- A councillor provided an update in respect of the Plastic Free Guildford Group, which was enthusiastic in its goal to reduce SUPs and would benefit from some support and guidance. The Experience Guildford Business Improvement District assisted with promotional activities and connected plastic free businesses, a number of which had achieved plastic free certification by reducing the amount of SUPs used. Further community engagement, including a presence at events and litter picks, would be beneficial.
- It was suggested that the practices and experiences of other local authorities be explored with a view to obtaining shared learning and best practice in this area.
- Reducing the use and impact of SUPs in its own estate was where the Council had most influence. In terms of engaging the wider community, the SUP Task Group and SEP had been influential. The Interim Head of Asset Management agreed to look into how the Council may resource engagement with local businesses and retailers to achieve the maximum effectiveness at the minimum cost. The Council's website was one cost effective means to engage the public who should be encouraged to take personal responsibility to reduce the use of SUPs.
- Experience Guildford was reported to be eager to work with the Council to promote tackling SUP in the future once it had addressed current Coronavirus related issues.

The Chairman summarised the main views expressed by the Board as its response to the report's request for input, which were as follows:

- There was a need for increased community engagement and co-ordinated publicity campaigns at local and county-wide levels to reduce the use of SUPs by the public and businesses.
- Litter picks were a useful method of engaging the community and heightening awareness of SUPs whilst improving the environment.
- With the assistance of the SUP Task Group, the Interim Head of Asset Management be requested to identify where the Council may undertake the most cost effective measures to reduce SUPs.
- The practices and experiences of other local authorities be explored with a view to obtaining shared learning and best practice in reducing SUPs.
- The aims of the plastic free Borough initiative should be pursued and the related certification obtained in recognition of this achievement.

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#### **PMI6 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN**

The Executive Forward Plan was noted without comment.

#### **PMI7 EAB WORK PROGRAMME**

A councillor reported that work in relation to the provision of solar farms had been pursued and she would discuss the matter with relevant officers as this may be an area of future interest for the EAB.

The wish to see unscheduled work programme items, such as Supplementary Planning Documents, at a sufficiently early stage to enable initial input to policy development and review of consultation responses prior to Executive determination was emphasised.

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**PMI8 EAB MEETINGS START TIME**

As remote Council meetings held due to the Coronavirus lockdown were felt to be more complex, lengthy and demanding than regular meetings, the Board was invited to consider whether remote meetings of the EAB should commence at an earlier time, for example 6:00 pm, to allow more timely completion of the transaction of business. The Board indicated that it wished the start time of its meetings to remain at 7:00 pm to accommodate employment and other commitments.

The meeting finished at 9.35 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman