

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Guildford Borough Council held at Council Chamber - Millmead House on Thursday 16 January 2020

- * Councillor Richard Billington (Mayor)
- * Councillor Marsha Moseley (Deputy Mayor)

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| * Councillor Paul Abbey | * Councillor Ted Mayne |
| Councillor Tim Anderson | * Councillor Julia McShane |
| * Councillor Jon Askew | * Councillor Ann McShee |
| Councillor Christopher Barrass | * Councillor Bob McShee |
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore | * Councillor Masuk Miah |
| Councillor David Bilbé | * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty |
| * Councillor Chris Blow | * Councillor Susan Parker |
| * Councillor Dennis Booth | * Councillor George Potter |
| * Councillor Ruth Brothwell | * Councillor Jo Randall |
| Councillor Colin Cross | * Councillor John Redpath |
| * Councillor Graham Eyre | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| Councillor Andrew Gomm | * Councillor Caroline Reeves |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | Councillor John Rigg |
| Councillor David Goodwin | * Councillor Tony Rooth |
| * Councillor Angela Gunning | Councillor Will Salmon |
| * Councillor Gillian Harwood | * Councillor Deborah Seabrook |
| * Councillor Jan Harwood | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor Liz Hogger | * Councillor Patrick Sheard |
| * Councillor Tom Hunt | * Councillor Paul Spooner |
| Councillor Gordon Jackson | * Councillor James Steel |
| * Councillor Diana Jones | * Councillor James Walsh |
| Councillor Steven Lee | * Councillor Fiona White |
| * Councillor Nigel Manning | * Councillor Catherine Young |

*Present

The Council stood in silent tribute to the memory of Honorary Alderman Clare Griffin, who had passed away recently.

CO97 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Anderson, Christopher Barrass, Andrew Gomm, David Goodwin, Gordon Jackson, Steven Lee, John Rigg, and Will Salmon and from Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Jayne Marks, and Lynda Strudwick.

CO98 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO99 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reminded the Council of his forthcoming Charity Valentine's Ball on Friday 14 February 2020 and noted that there were still some places available. The Mayor asked for councillors' support for the fundraising activities on the night, perhaps by donating an auction or raffle prize.

CO100 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications from the Leader of the Council.

CO101 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Amanda Mullarkey, on behalf of Guildford Residents Association, addressed the Council in respect of the Weyside Urban Village Development and raised the following questions/points:

- (1) What optimism bias is being applied and is it high enough? Is the Council being over-optimistic in hoping that this relatively modest housing plot can unlock decontamination, new sewage treatment works, Surrey Waste Depot and a Waste facility?
- (2) Are the Council's decontamination and remediation costs sufficiently robust? Is £40.5 million enough to put right all the historical industrial and waste uses at this site, including the safe removal of pollutants and contaminants?
- (3) Has the Council fully factored in flooding and land instability?
- (4) Does 1,500 homes mean a Stalinist wall of flats along the Wey on the approach to Guildford? Is 1,500 homes wishful thinking trying to make the sums work or what would make for a good community scheme? Previously, councillors thought that 1,500 homes would mean too many tall towers. Has the Council dropped the masterplan scheme? The 3D visuals to market the site showed a massive blot with no thought for the riverside setting.
- (5) Has the Council resolved the road access issues, particularly across the flood plain? is this a cost and risk deferred? Has the Council factored in the cost of compacting roads to stop them sinking?
- (6) Will the Council reinstate the Slyfield community forum?

The Leader of the Council responded to the statement by indicating that a full response to the questions would be given after the meeting. The Leader expressed confidence that the team working on this project would be addressing these and other issues as the project progressed.

CO102 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors in respect of the business for which this extraordinary meeting had been called.

CO103 WEYSIDE URBAN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

The Council noted that Weyside Urban Village (formerly the Slyfield Area Regeneration Project (SARP)) was a major 41-hectare brownfield regeneration scheme that the Council had anticipated could deliver 1,500 homes across a range of tenures as well as 2,000 square metres of community space and 6,500 square metres of employment space. As such, the Government had designated it as one of its national Housing Zones.

The Council had been working for over 15 years to de-risk the infrastructure delivery and site assembly process. Over 44 per cent of the site was currently in Council ownership, and 100 per cent would be achieved on completion of land transfers with Thames Water. The conditional contract with Thames Water had been signed on 25 April 2019.

Housing was of great significance to the Borough and formed a major theme to the Adopted Local Plan. There was an ongoing shortage of affordable housing, particularly for first time buyers which in turn contributed to a skill shortage in the Borough.

The Council considered a report which sought approval of a capital budget of £359.504 million to enable the infrastructure phase of the Weyside Urban Village Project development to be

carried out. The Council had been awarded a £52.3 million grant from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF).

An EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) grant of £7.5 million had also been awarded.

At its meeting on 7 January 2020, the Executive had considered this report and had authorised the Managing Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to sign and complete the Grant Agreement with Homes England to implement the infrastructure works and draw down the grant expenditure.

The Executive had also endorsed the recommendation to Council as set out in the report.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves, seconded by the Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service, Councillor Joss Bigmore, the Council unanimously:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That an additional capital supplementary estimate of £274.057 million be approved to allow a total capital budget of £359.504 million to enable the Council to deliver the infrastructure phase of this scheme.
- (2) That £5.781 million of the additional capital budget be placed on the approved capital programme to progress the allotment relocation and funding of the Thames Water agreement costs during 2019-20.
- (3) That the Council acts as Infrastructure Developer until completion of the Thames Water Infrastructure in 2026.

Reasons:

The reasons for recommendation cover financial, economic and social benefits.

The budget will enable the Council to deliver the infrastructure for the development ensuring deliverability and control.

The land value will be increased by the infrastructure phase being delivered upfront and ahead of Land Parcel Sales.

The project will also deliver:

- 1500 new homes including 600 Affordable Homes
- 2000 square metres of community space
- 6500 square metres of employment space
- A new relocated fit for purpose Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works
- Extensive infrastructure improvements
- This scheme contributes to the delivery of the adopted Local Plan
- This scheme contributes £233 million in economic impacts for Guildford

The project has significant infrastructure to be put in place to enable the above critical success factors to be delivered. Allocating a capital budget of £317.355 million will enable all of the infrastructure phase to be delivered and will de-risk the site in readiness for the next stage to facilitate the delivery of homes.

CO104 COMMON SEAL

The Council

RESOLVED: That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any documents to give effect to any decisions taken by the Council at this meeting.

The meeting finished at 7.55 pm

Signed

Mayor

Date