

# EXECUTIVE

7 January 2020

- \* Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- \* Councillor Fiona White (Vice-Chairman)

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore   | * Councillor Julia McShane  |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | * Councillor John Rigg      |
| * Councillor David Goodwin  | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor Jan Harwood    | * Councillor James Steel    |

\*Present

Councillors Dennis Booth, Angela Gunning, Ramsey Nagaty, John Redpath, Tony Rooth and Deborah Seabrook were also in attendance.

## **EX67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **EX68 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

In relation to agenda item 7, the following non-pecuniary interests were disclosed:

Councillor Caroline Reeves was a Trustee of Guildford Action.  
Councillor Julia McShane was the Council's representative on the Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership, Guildford Action and Guildford Philanthropy  
Councillor Pauline Searle was a patron of Homestart  
Councillor Fiona White was the Council's representative and a Trustee on Guildford Citizens Advice

Councillor Joss Bigmore disclosed a pecuniary interest in relation to Item 8 in that he and his wife were landlord owners of property in Guildford. Councillor Bigmore absented himself from the meeting during the consideration of Item 8.

Councillor James Steel disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Item 8 in that he was a tenant in a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), a member of the "Cut the rent" Committee at the University of Surrey and a member of the Guildford Private Renters Association.

## **EX69 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 26 November 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

## **EX70 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader of the Council made two announcements. First, that Surrey County Council had confirmed £1 million funding for a project that would improve bus services in Guildford, particularly with regard to the provision of 'real time' information at bus stops. It would also become possible to request developer contributions for the provision of 'real time' services when planning applications were submitted in appropriate cases.

Second, the Leader relayed residents' concerns about the use of sky lanterns and would be seeking legal advice on how we might discourage local people from using sky lanterns and launching them from Council owned land.

## **EX71 SHALFORD COMMON LAND MANAGEMENT**

The Lead Councillor for Countryside, Rural Life and the Arts introduced the report.

It was noted that Shalford Common was registered as common land and that Guildford Borough Council as the freehold owner had a duty to protect and manage the Common as set out in the Commons Act 2006. The Council had been in receipt of complaints about car parking on the Common over many years and such activity was in breach of commons legislation. In response, the Executive was asked to consider measures drawn up in an action plan in respect of car parking, access onto the Common, leisure activities and highway improvements to ensure the council was in compliance with its statutory duty to protect the Common and to reduce the number of local conflicts and complaints.

It was proposed that such measures be applied to seven priority areas and consist of a combination of designated car parking, physical measures to prevent unauthorised access and the enforcement of such through new byelaws. Public consultation would be a statutory requirement to introduce new byelaws and the proposed changes to registered Common Land.

Public speaker, Mr Ivor Thomas described the area of the Common around the village sign as still vulnerable to parking damage and that provision for parking in support of local business was adequately provided in Kings Road without designating a part of the Common into parking bays.

The meeting was also addressed by the Chairman of Shalford Parish Council, a local businessman and an ex-parish councillor for Shalford who expressed their views on the proposals. The Lead Councillor welcomed their views and the forthcoming public consultation which would provide the opportunity to capture the opinion of users of the Common.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the options for seven priority areas on the Common, as set out in the report submitted to the Executive, be put forward for public consultation.
- (2) That an action plan be implemented to comply with commons legislation for car parking, access, leisure activities and highway improvements.
- (3) That a public consultation be carried out as part of the action plan.
- (4) That the introduction of new byelaws and revocation of existing byelaws for Shalford Common to support the proposed actions be approved in principle, subject to approval of full Council.

Reasons:

- Compliance with Guildford Borough Council's statutory obligations as landowner to protect Shalford Common from encroachments in line with the Commons Act 2006 including the prevention of unauthorised parking
- Reduction of conflicts and complaints regarding un-authorised car parking
- Provision of car parking areas compliant with the Commons Act 2006
- Protection of biodiversity on Shalford Common which is a designated SNCI

## **EX72 RIPLEY VILLAGE HALL FORWARD FUNDING PROPOSAL**

The Lead Councillor for Assets and Finance, Customer Services introduced the report.

Built in the 1970s, Ripley Village Hall was designed to last for up to 25 years. It was now in a poor state and nearing the end of its useful life. There was a need for a replacement hall to meet the need for community facilities in the village. Planning permission for a new village hall was granted in February 2019. Ripley Village Hall Trustees had raised funds locally to help pay for the new village hall and Ripley Parish Council had taken a £500,000 loan from the Public Works Loan Board. Although significant funds had been raised, there was still a funding shortfall of £600,000 for the main village hall and Trustees had asked the Borough Council for a contribution.

The Executive was asked to consider granting a cashflow loan drawn from future S106 monies to be received from the Garlick's Arch site which had been allocated in the Council's adopted Local Plan for development. In addition, if the development of Garlick's Arch were to proceed the Council anticipated receiving a New Homes Bonus (NHB) grant. The amount of the loan would be determined if, and when, planning permission for the Garlick's Arch was granted and the Council signed a S106 agreement with the developer. The value of the loan would not exceed any agreed S106 contribution due to Ripley together with 30% of the anticipated NHB grant from the development.

However, given the urgency of the matter and on approval from the Executive, it was proposed that a contribution of £25,000 (as an upfront payment of the 30% NHB grant from the development) funded from the new homes bonus reserve, would be paid to the Trust to enable them to proceed to the next stage of the development. Repayment for the loan would be at the point the Council received the S106 contribution from the developer and the NHB income from the government. If, for any reason, the S106 monies were not received following a signed S106 agreement, the Village Hall Trust would be asked to enter into a repayment plan for the loan over a period of 50 years.

Suzie Powell-Cullingford and Derek Austin of the Ripley Village Hall Trust addressed the meeting and endorsed the proposals. The Executive considered the proposal to be a singular matter of assistance that would not set a precedent amongst other parish councils.

The Executive

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That a cashflow loan be provided to Ripley Village Hall Trust, to be repaid from S106 contributions for community use in Ripley and 30% of the New Homes Bonus grant anticipated from the Garlick's Arch Development.
- (2) That the exact sum of the loan be agreed by the Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance, Assets, and Customer Services once planning permission is in place and a S106 agreement is signed.
- (3) That the loan amount shall not exceed the S106 and NHB funding available to the Council.
- (4) That an upfront payment of the loan of £25,000 be made from the Council's new homes bonus reserve, which will be part of the 30% NHB contribution towards the scheme.

**Reason:**

To enhance community facilities in Ripley by supporting and making a contribution towards the redevelopment of the Village Hall.

## EX73 REVIEW OF GRANTS

The Lead Councillor for Community Health, Support and Wellbeing introduced the report.

The Executive was asked to consider a report setting out recommended changes to the way in which financial support could be offered by the Council to local voluntary and community organisations in future. These changes were centred around the mechanisms being made available for voluntary and community organisations to raise funds, such as the Guildford Community Lottery and the proposed Guildford crowdfunding platform.

In recognition of the commitments within the Corporate Plan there were proposals to increase funding available for voluntary organisations working with priority groups, such as homelessness, mental health services, support for vulnerable families and services for the elderly. In particular, there was a proposal to increase funding of the core service provision of both Guildford and Ash Citizens Advice.

It was recommended such changes should come into effect in readiness for implementation in the 2021-22 financial year. The Voluntary Grants and Community Grants Schemes would continue to operate in the usual way for the last time during 2020 for funding in the 2020-21 financial year.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Council enters into funding agreements for the services provided by the following organisations and that the sums indicated below be included in the 2021-22 budget for this purpose:

Guildford Action Day Service	£90,000
Citizens Advice County Court Service	£5,000
Guildford Action for Families	£30,000
Home Support Services Guildford	£20,000
Oakleaf Enterprise	£20,000
Canterbury Care Centre	£20,000
Homestart	£5,000

- (2) That a revised Voluntary Grants Scheme with an annual budget of £50,000 be retained to provide financial support for organisations working with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.
- (3) That funding for the core service provision of Guildford and Ash Citizens Advice be increased by 10% with effect from 2021-22, to the following total amounts:

Guildford Citizens Advice	£235,300
Ash Citizens Advice	£76,450

- (4) That the Community Grants Scheme be replaced by a new Aspire Grants Scheme with an annual budget of £30,000.
- (5) That the Managing Director, in consultation with relevant Lead Councillors, be authorised to make all necessary arrangements to implement the new funding arrangements set out in the report submitted to the Executive, including determining the detailed eligibility criteria and rules for the operation of the revised grant schemes.

- (6) That the establishment of a Guildford crowdfunding platform to provide financial support for projects being promoted by local community groups and organisations be approved.
- (7) That the allocation of £160,000 from the New Homes Bonus Reserve to fund the operating costs of the proposed crowdfunding platform and the Council's financial contribution to eligible projects for a two-year trial period be approved.
- (8) That the Managing Director be authorised to investigate and, if appropriate, make all necessary arrangements to establish a joint crowdfunding platform with Surrey County Council.
- (9) That the Managing Director be authorised to seek tenders for the establishment and operation of a Guildford crowdfunding platform and to appoint the most suitable provider.
- (10) That, subject to paragraph (8) above, the Managing Director be authorised to make all necessary arrangements for launching and administering the proposed new crowdfunding platform, including determining the detailed eligibility criteria for voluntary and community organisations wishing to raise funds and making financial contributions towards qualifying projects.

Reason:

To ensure that the Council's support for voluntary and community organisation meets Corporate Plan priorities of supporting those with the greatest needs, whilst maintaining funding streams for local projects that enhance our communities.

#### **EX74 EXTENSION OF PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR ENFORCEMENT POWERS**

The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability introduced the report.

The Executive was advised of new legislative powers for Regulatory Services Housing Standards teams to improve housing standards in the private rented sector which would enable financial penalties to be imposed as an alternative to prosecuting offenders.

The Executive was asked to approve a proposed charging structure for such penalties and to delegate authority to the Regulatory Services Manager to determine the amount of any financial penalty in accordance with the charging structure.

It was noted that the amount of rented accommodation and Housing with Multiple Occupation (HMOs) had vastly increased in recent years and continued to expand. It was important that tenants were protected and the new regulations would send a strong message.

The Executive

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the charging structure for financial penalties imposed in accordance with the powers introduced by Section 126 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.
- (2) That the Regulatory Services Manager be authorised to implement the charging structure and make any necessary arrangements to ensure the procedure is process driven with a consistent approach.

Reason:

To enable the Council to exercise the powers introduced by Section 126 of the Act to impose financial penalties as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences under the Housing Act 2004.

**EX75 PUBLIC HEALTH FUNERALS**

The Lead Councillor for Personal Health, Safety and Wellbeing introduced the report.

The Executive was asked to consider a draft public health funeral policy that had been prepared in readiness for public consultation. The policy set out the Council's role and responsibilities and the level of funeral provision to provide a dignified, value for money funeral service.

It was noted that the frequency of public health funerals and consequently the cost to the Council was low, but that it was right to have policy guidance in place. It was requested that the draft policy make explicit that where an individual had no estate that the Council would pay the funeral costs.

The Executive

**RESOLVED:**

That a 6-week consultation on the draft Public Health Funeral Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved, subject to an amendment to paragraph 3.2 to the effect that where the cost of the funeral arrangements cannot be recovered from the deceased's estate, the Council would cover the cost.

Reason:

To ensure that Public Health Funerals are conducted in a fair and transparent way and that the deceased's estate is managed in line with the current legislation and guidance

**EX76 DIGITAL GAMES HUB FUNDING PROPOSAL (ROCKETDESK GUILDFORD RIVERSIDE)**

The Executive was asked to consider a funding proposal for a new dedicated digital games co-working space in the town centre. Under the proposals highlighted in the report the council would, in conjunction with the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, jointly match-fund the capital expenditure for setting up the new facility. The facility would be owned and run by the proprietors of the Rocketdesk Co-working space on the Surrey Research Park (the new facility would be branded 'Rocketdesk Guildford Riverside).

The report was welcomed and the proposal described as a very positive step forward for a business sector that was important to Guildford.

The Executive

**RESOLVED:** That funding of £40,000 to Rocketdesk Guildford Ltd. be approved to support economic growth and that such funding shall comprise:

1. A funding grant of £10,000 from existing budgets; and
2. A deferred loan of £30,000, to be repaid over a 24-month period, funded from the business rates equalisation reserve.

Reason:

This proposal will directly support the growth and development of the Digital Games sector in the Borough which is a priority in both the Council's Corporate Plan and Innovation Strategy.

**EX77 WEYSIDE URBAN VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT**

The Executive was asked to consider an update on the progress of the Weyside Urban Village Project (formerly known as the Slyfield Area Regeneration Programme) and to authorise 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 to draw down the grant expenditure.

The Executive was also requested to recommend to Council a capital budget to enable the council to act as Infrastructure Developer and to deliver the infrastructure phase of the project. The project had been in development for a period of fifteen years and was described as one of the most discussed projects for the council. An increase in project costs was noted and the project team would seek to mitigate and make savings wherever possible as the project progressed.

The Executive

**RESOLVED:**

That the Managing Director be authorised, 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 further

**RECOMMENDED (to Council):**

- (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 the Weyside Urban Village Development.
- (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:

There are financial, economic and social benefits:

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

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

The project would 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 the capital budget would enable all of the infrastructure phase to be delivered and would de-risk the site in readiness for the next stage to facilitate the delivery of homes.

## **EX78 WALNUT BRIDGE - APPLICATION FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

The Chairman asked councillors present at the meeting to note that the appendices to the committee report contained exempt information about infrastructure costs designated as such under Paragraph 3, of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. Discussion of those appendices would require the meeting to exclude the public.

It was further noted there was an error in the report to the Executive on page 158 para 3.17 (f). The figure should read “£500,000”.

The Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration and Housing Delivery introduced the report. It was acknowledged that the replacement of Walnut Bridge had a long history, initially identified in 2012 in the Guildford Interim Town Centre Framework and again in 2014 when it was identified as a priority in the Guildford Town and Approaches Movement Study (GTAMS). The project was subsequently awarded LEP funding as part of the “Unlocking Guildford, Guildford Town Centre Transport Package” in 2014. It formed one of a number of projects and interventions which together would help alleviate congestion in the Town Centre.

In July 2016, the Executive had formally approved the project to replace Walnut Bridge. The replacement would provide improved access to the town centre from the station and was in anticipation of the significant developments expected in the immediate area. There was concern that the existing Bridge was too narrow to accommodate the increasing flow of pedestrians and cyclists. The new Bridge would be wider than the existing bridge, facilitate two-way cycle flow and be fully accessible. It would also lie on a more obvious alignment to encourage use by new and infrequent users as well as local people familiar to the area. Additionally, it would be seen as a catalyst for regeneration in the Bedford Plaza and Bedford Wharf area thereby becoming a critical access corridor from the Station through to the High Street. Finally, it would encourage more sustainable travel and reduce the need for cyclists to have to use the Gyratory. The bridge had received planning permission in 2018.

The Executive was informed that it was proposed to reincorporate the Bedford Plaza Public Realm works into the Bridge project primarily because the lighting design of Bedford Plaza including the Bridge had been included in these works. The planning permission for the Bridge required that the public realm works be completed within six months of the completion of the Bridge. This would mean that it was possible the Bridge could not be opened after completion until public realm works were completed unless a temporary lighting system was installed. There was therefore a case to be made for these to be undertaken with the Bridge works. This could allow for economies of scale, savings in mobilisation costs etc. and could provide some additional funding from its £500,000 budget to be brought into the Bridge project.

The Executive were asked to consider three recommendations. To address a funding gap in the Walnut Bridge project by means of a transfer from the capital contingency fund of £450,000. Secondly, that the Bedford Plaza Public realm works be incorporated within the Walnut Bridge

Project. Finally, £350,000 be transferred from the provisional to approved capital budget to fund the public realm work.

Prior to the formal consideration of the matter, Mr David Smith addressed the Executive in support of the replacement of Walnut Bridge as soon as possible.

During the formal debate, it was generally agreed that Walnut Bridge should be replaced at some stage, but the discussion centred on the cost, design and timing of the project. Two members of the Executive were opposed to providing additional funding to support the proposed design. There were concerns expressed that the level of the increased cost of the project was not acceptable. It was further argued that the project should be put on hold or a temporary structure be installed until there was a more suitable design in keeping with the proposed new Bedford Wharf public realm landscape.

In response, there were arguments concerning the immediate safety of the bridge, the safety of users of the bridge, the impact of the existing design on accessibility and the role of the bridge in realising sustainable transport plans for the town centre. It was argued that a delay in completion of the bridge would not be acceptable to local people. It was noted that if the design of the bridge were changed a new planning application could be required so increasing the cost and timescales further and that the LEP funding would need to be returned if not utilised for the bridge project within the year possibly making the project unfeasible. The meeting heard that should the Executive approve the recommendations infrastructure spending would attract further funding in the future and that there may be some flexibility on the design of the bridge within the parameters of the existing planning permission.

There followed a discussion concerning the designation of some financial information as exempt. It was explained that contractor bids as part of the tendering process must be kept confidential. Once a contract had been agreed the overall budget would be reported to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee along with regular updates to the Executive as the project progressed. Revised budget figures would also be reported at the end of the year and would become public in due course.

In order to consider the exempt information referred to the above, the Executive

RESOLVED: That, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of information contained in the Appendices to the report on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Act.

Having considered the matter and readmitted the public to the meeting, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a virement of £450,000 be transferred from the capital contingency fund for the Walnut Bridge Project
- (2) That the Bedford Plaza Public realm works be incorporated within the Walnut Bridge Project.
- (3) That £350,000 be transferred from the provisional to approved capital budget to fund the public realm work.

Reasons:

It had become apparent that there was a funding gap and a virement of £450k was required to get this project completed.

The assimilation of the Bedford Plaza Public Realm works into the Bridge project was twofold:

1. To combine the lighting design for both schemes within the main Bridge Contract and
2. To leverage some of the associated budget for use on the Bridge project through economies of scale and mobilisation costs etc.

The budget for the public realm works would need to be transferred to the approved budget to enable the work to proceed.

**EX79 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Executive

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**EX80 WOODBRIDGE ROAD SPORTSGROUND PAVILION REFURBISHMENT - SETTLEMENT OF THE FINAL ACCOUNT FOR WORKS**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report.

The Executive had approved a budget of £1.9 million on 19 July 2016 to refurbish and rebuild the Guildford Sportsground Pavilion at the Guildford Sportsground, registered charity (305056). The refurbishment of the Woodbridge Road Sportsground Pavilion was completed in April 2018. Since April 2018 work had been ongoing to see through the defects liability period and settle the final account for the project. The Executive considered a report which set out the end accounting for the project. In consultation with the Leader of the Council, Lead Councillors and Monitoring Officer, the Managing Director had settled the final accounts which represented value for money to the Council.

A post project review would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in due course.

The Executive

RESOLVED: That the use by the Managing Director of the delegated power to act in relation to matters of urgency in respect of this matter, be noted.

Reason:

To report decisions in accordance with the Council's Constitution

The meeting finished at 9.07 pm

Signed .....

Date

Chairman

# EXECUTIVE

21 January 2020

- \* Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- \* Councillor Fiona White (Vice-Chairman)

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|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore   | * Councillor Julia McShane  |
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| * Councillor David Goodwin  | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor Jan Harwood    | * Councillor James Steel    |

\*Present

Councillors Dennis Booth, Tony Rooth, and Patrick Sheard were also in attendance.

## **EX81 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **EX82 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no disclosures of interest.

## **EX83 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader announced that she would be circulating details of a number of initiatives regarding the proposed Town Centre Masterplan to all councillors.

## **EX84 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)**

The Executive noted that, on 23 July 2019, the Council, along with many other councils including Surrey County Council, declared a Climate Emergency. As part of this resolution, the Council had also committed to calling on the UK government to provide the powers, resources and funding support to make local, as well as national, action against climate change possible. A further motion was agreed by Full Council on 3 December 2019 that stated:

*“The Council recognises that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has recently undergone a review. However, with the now declared Climate Emergency (subsequent to that review), and the widespread support of the principle of building on brownfield before greenfield sites wherever possible, the Council asks the Executive to request the Secretary of State to hold an immediate further review of the NPPF and its guidance to:*

- (1) Recognise the declared Climate Emergency and provide more detailed guidance on creating “sustainable development”, which takes into account the required actions on transport and development to meet Carbon Zero, for both brownfield and green field sites.*
- (2) Better assist with brownfield delivery by granting councils simple effective powers to bring forward currently, as well as previously, used sites.*
- (3) Amend Paragraph 145 of the NPPF – to correct the unintended consequences in Greenbelt areas of enabling unrestricted building of inappropriate houses through ‘infilling’, yet at the same time preventing residents from having a simple extension or garage for their own home.”*

The Executive considered a report setting out a draft letter to the Secretary of State for formal approval and

RESOLVED: That the draft letter to the Secretary of State requesting a further review of the NPPF and its guidance, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be finalised and sent by the Lead Councillor on behalf of the Executive to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Reason:

To address the motion agreed by full Council on 3 December 2019.

## **EX85 NEW CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND CORPORATE PLAN**

The Executive noted that the Council had approved its current Corporate Plan for the period 2018 to 2023 at its meeting on 15 May 2018. However, since the Borough Council elections in May 2019, members of the Executive had discussed new corporate priorities. A list of draft priorities was developed across the four following strategic themes:

Climate Change and Environment  
Housing and Community  
Economy and Regeneration  
Improved Council

The Executive considered a report which set out new draft corporate priorities for public consultation and proposed a timetable and process for developing a new corporate plan.

The draft priorities had been the subject of a workshop for all councillors held on 13 November 2019. The workshop had focussed on defining the outcomes and impacts that the Council would most wish to deliver under the following draft priorities:

### Climate Change and Environment

- Working with residents and businesses towards becoming a carbon neutral borough
- Protecting our environment
- Making travel easier and more sustainable

### Housing and Community

- Providing the housing that people need
- Caring for people who need our help
- Keeping the community active and well

### Economy and Regeneration

- Encouraging sustainable, clean economic growth
- Supporting businesses to provide the jobs people need
- Regenerating Guildford town centre

### Improved Council

- Using new ways of working to improve value for money and customer service
- Improving transparency, consultation and community engagement

The Executive noted that the report had also been considered by the Joint Executive Advisory Board at its meeting held on 9 January 2020, and their comments were taken into consideration by the Executive.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the new draft corporate priorities for the Council, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report submitted to the Executive and referred to above, be approved for public consultation purposes, subject to the amendment of the priority "Providing the housing that people need" to read: "*Residents to have access to a good quality home that meets their needs at a price they can afford*".
- (2) That the proposed process and indicative timetable for the production of a new corporate plan, as set out in the report, be approved.
- (3) That the Managing Director be authorised, in consultation with Group Leaders, to appoint a councillor working group to support the development of the new corporate plan.

#### Reason:

To enable the Council to develop new corporate priorities and a corporate plan to provide the strategic framework for managing our business and resources effectively.

### **EX86 ASSET DISPOSAL FOR LESS THAN BEST CONSIDERATION**

The Executive noted that the Council owned a large property portfolio, the majority of which was held either for investment purposes or for operational purposes such as the Millmead offices or the day centres.

The Council owned a small number of operational properties that it retained to enable other organisations to support the general wellbeing of our communities. Examples ranged from local sports clubs to organisations such as Guildford Action supporting our work with homeless people. These organisations were generally either third sector or voluntary in nature and had limited financial means. The Council, by allowing them to rent one of its properties at below market rental levels, enabled the provision of services that might not otherwise be provided.

The decision to dispose of its property assets at less than market value currently rested in all cases with the Executive. For cases where the proposed reduction was relatively small the process was somewhat burdensome. The Executive considered a report which sought approval for a streamlined approach to such cases and involved the delegation such decisions to officers in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets.

The Council would also benefit from introducing a clear process for assessing disposals of land and buildings where the disposal would be below market value.

The report had also sought authority to take immediate action to complete the leasing of ten Council-owned buildings for less than best consideration to generate an income for the Council and provide accommodation to community-based organisations that supported the general wellbeing of our communities.

Having considered the report, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the grant of the nine leases with terms, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.
- (2) That a new procedure for the Council to follow when considering and approving the disposal of land and buildings (including leases) for less than best consideration, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.
- (3) That the Head of Asset Management be authorised, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, the Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service and the relevant lead councillor, to accept terms for the disposal of assets for less than the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained where the undervalue (the difference between the market value and the proposed transaction) is £30,000 or less and, for lease transactions, the lease term is 15 years or less.

Reasons:

To secure the letting of various Council-owned buildings that will both generate an income for the Council and provide accommodation to community-based organisations that support the general wellbeing of our communities and apply a robust but streamlined approach for future disposal of assets for less than best consideration.

**EX87 OFF-STREET PARKING BUSINESS PLAN 2020-21**

The Executive considered an update report on progress made in delivering the recommendations contained in the Business Plan approved in January 2019 and sought approval for a number of changes to arrangements for 2020-21.

The report highlighted a number of improvements completed, including contactless payment at Bedford Road MSCP, increases in electric charge points and significant investments to maintain the high standard of our car parks. The report also highlighted work to look into how green initiatives could be supported by creating energy from Solar panels. The Guildford Parking Annual Report appended to the report highlighted an increase in ticket sales of 2% and revenue of 0.3%. It was clear that our car park charges compared well and were better value than most major shopping destinations in the region.

Having considered the proposals, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Monday to Saturday and Sunday 'daytime' charges across off-street car parks be held at the current levels to support the town centre economy, except for those at Farnham Road MSCP, Bedford Road Surface, Commercial Road 2, Mary Road and Old Police Station car parks.
- (2) That a discounted 'early-bird' rate of 90p per hour be introduced at Farnham Road MSCP, instead of the present £1 per hour, for those that enter the car park before 7.00am, and that the maximum daily charge of £7.20 be levied for these users, instead of the standard £8.00.
- (3) That the hourly Monday to Saturday 'daytime' rate in Bedford Road Surface, Commercial Road 2, Mary Road and Old Police Station car parks for stays up to 3 hours in duration be increased from £1.30 per hour to £1.50 per hour, and that from April 2021 all tariffs across

the town centre car parks be increased by 10p per hour, or equivalent thereof, in respect to season tickets and contract parking rates.

- (4) That the Monday to Friday and Monday to Saturday season ticket and pre-payment card charges in York Road MSCP be increased by 5%.
- (5) That approval be given to on-street residents' permit holders for Areas A, B and D to park in all the town centre pay and display car parks until 10am the next day (Monday to Saturday) rather than 8am, if they purchase and display a valid pay and display ticket for the previous evening between 6pm and 10pm,
- (6) That the decking of Leapale Road MSCP car park be coated to improve the service life of the structure, in a similar fashion to that already present in Bedford Road MSCP and Castle MSCP, and that as part of the project, the spaces be increased in size / reduced in number (from 384 to around 300), to improve circulation within the car park and encourage greater use, particularly by users with mobility issues, those with young families, and electric vehicles.
- (7) That the EV charging spaces be enforceable, and that the necessary changes to the traffic regulation order required to achieve this be advertised, objections invited, and that if any representations are received, these be considered and determined by the Parking Manager in consultation with the Lead Councillor.
- (8) That the performance of Parking Services in 2018-19, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be noted.

#### Reasons:

- (i) In recent years, the incremental increases in tariffs have not impacted the overall usage of the car parks. This is in spite of the challenging conditions being experienced by the retail sector within 'the high street'. The relatively modest changes to the pricing structure introduced in York Road MSCP and North Street car parks in April 2019 have continued this trend (see Appendix 1).

As was the case in 2019-20, the plan for 2020-21 is again to hold the price of parking in the vast majority of car parks with a few notable exceptions, namely Farnham Road MSCP, Bedford Road Surface, Commercial Road 2, Mary Road and Old Police Station car parks,

- (ii) Farnham Road MSCP is the primary long-stay car park within the town. To reflect this, the charges in this car park are lower than the short/medium-stay town centre car parks.

Access to this car park, for those travelling from all directions other than the west, involves driving around the Bridge Street gyratory system. At peak times, congestion can be an issue, albeit that this is a wider issue, rather than one specifically caused by the operation of this car park.

To encourage users of Farnham Road MSCP to arrive within the car park before the morning peak of the rush hour, it is proposed that the hourly rate for those arriving before 7am Monday to Saturday, be reduced from the current £1 per hour, to 90 pence per hour, for the duration of their stay. The maximum daily charge for users that arrive earlier will reduce from £8.00 to £7.20. It is hoped these changes will reduce congestion and assist with the town's Air Quality and Climate Change target.

- (iii) Currently, all the main short and medium-stay town centre car parks have a standardised charging structure. Whilst this is the case, it is evident that the surface car parks are often more popular than the multi-storey car parks. Indeed, queues can sometimes form

on the approaches to the surface car parks, at times when ample spare capacity is available in nearby multi-storey car parks. This can lead to congestion.

Whilst preliminary findings of a recently undertaken Parking Study suggests car park users are more greatly influenced by convenience, rather than tariff, it is felt appropriate to adopt a pricing differential to encourage greater use of the larger-capacity, multi-storey car parks. A 20p differential in the hourly tariff between the surface and the multi-storey car parks may encourage changes in the behaviour for those users that might be more sensitive to price considerations.

Again, it is hoped these changes will assist with the town's Air Quality and Climate Change targets by reducing queuing on the approaches to the smaller-capacity surface car parks.

Therefore, Option 2 (section 12.2) is recommended to achieve these aims.

- (iv) In April 2019, the Monday to Saturday 'daytime' charge in York Road MSCP was increased by 30 pence per hour, from £1.00 per hour to £1.30 per hour. However, the decision was taken to increase season ticket and pre-payment cards at a lower rate over a number of years until equity was reached with other similar town centre car parks.

The 5% season ticket increase proposed for 2020-21 is in keeping with this plan to achieve equity over time.

- (v) There tends to be significant spare capacity within the town centre car parks in the evenings and overnight. Meanwhile, permit-holding residents within certain parts of Areas A, B and D have raised concerns about the availability of on-street space in the vicinity of their homes, at these times.

Whilst possible changes to the operational hours of the town centre CPZ, being considered by the Guildford Joint Committee as part of the current on-street parking review, may go some way towards addressing these issues, there is scope to offer local permit-holding residents greater flexibility to use the pay and display car parks overnight.

Although Area D permit holders can already do so for free, they have to pay the normal daytime charges if they remain within the car park after 8am.

The proposal modifies this dispensation, by extending it to permit-holding residents of Areas A and B. Although all permit holders will be expected to purchase and display a valid 'overnight' ticket, costing £1, it will allow them to park until 10am the next day (Monday to Saturday), rather than 8am, when the normal 'day-time' charges start. Therefore, they effectively get £3.60-£3.80 worth of parking for £1.

## **EX88 CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020-21 TO 2024-2025**

The Executive considered a report on the Council's capital and investment strategy, which gave a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

The Executive noted that in order to achieve the ambitious targets within the Corporate Plan, the Council needed to invest in its assets, via capital expenditure.

The Council had a current underlying need to borrow for the general fund capital programme of £290 million. Officers had put forward bids, with a net cost to the Council of £47.8 million,

increasing the underlying need to borrow to £338 million should these proposals be approved for inclusion in the programme.

Some capital receipts or revenue streams could arise as a result of investment in particular schemes, but in most cases were currently uncertain and it was too early to make assumptions. Some information had been included in the capital vision highlighting the potential income. It was likely that there were cash-flow implications of the development schemes, where income would come in after the five-year time horizon and the expenditure would be incurred earlier in the programme.

All projects would be funded by general fund capital receipts, grants and contributions, reserves and, finally, borrowing. It was not currently known how each scheme would be funded and, in the case of development projects, what the delivery model would be. To ensure the Council demonstrated that its capital expenditure plans were affordable, sustainable and prudent, Prudential Indicators were set that must be monitored each year.

The capital programme included a number of significant regeneration schemes, which it was assumed would be financed from General Fund resources. However, subject to detailed design of the schemes, there might be scope to fund them from HRA resources rather than General Fund resources in due course. Detailed funding proposals for each scheme would be considered when the Outline Business Case for each scheme was presented to the Executive for approval.

Main areas of expenditure in the capital programme were:

- £5 million – vehicle replacement programme
- £18 million – museum development
- £32.5 million – town centre transport schemes
- £25.4 million – Ash road bridge
- £40.2 million – North Downs Housing
- £26.6 million – Guildford Park CP
- £9 million – Midleton redevelopment
- £59 million – Weyside Urban Village

The report included a summary of the new bids submitted, the position and profiling of the current capital programme (2019-20 to 2023-24) and the capital vision schemes.

The Corporate Management Team, the Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service, and the Joint Executive Advisory Board Budget Task Group, and the Joint EAB had all reviewed the bids presented in the report.

The report had also included the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy and the Prudential Indicators.

In relation to Treasury management, the Executive noted that officers carried out the treasury management function within the parameters set by the Council each year and in accordance with the approved treasury management practices.

The Council was in a good financial position, with a strong asset base and a good level of reserves.

The budget for investment income in 2020-21 was £1.684 million, based on an average investment portfolio of £79.8 million, at an average rate of 2.18%. The budget for debt interest paid was £5.656 million, of which £5.06 million related to the HRA.

In relation to non-financial investments and investment strategy, the Executive was informed that councils could invest to support public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (service investments) or to earn investment income (commercial investments where this was the main purpose).

The Council had £161.244 million of investment property on its balance sheet, generating a return of £9 million and a current yield of 6.3%.

The criteria for purchasing investment property, when originally approved were to achieve a minimum qualitative score and yield an internal rate of return (IRR) of at least 8%. It was now recommended that the IRR be changed to 5.5% due to the change in the market forces and recognition of the move to investing for strategic purposes, for example economic growth and housing and regeneration.

The Council had invested £12.251 million in its housing company – North Downs Housing (NDH), via 40% equity to Guildford Holdings Limited (£4.903 million) (who in turn passed the equity to NDH) and 60% loan direct to NDH (£7.348 million) at a rate of base plus 5% (currently 5.75%). The loan was a repayment loan in line with the NDH business plan.

The Executive, having noted the comments of both the Joint Executive Advisory Board and the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee in respect of the Capital and Investment Strategy, which were set out in full on the Supplementary Information Sheet circulated at the meeting,

RESOLVED: That, subject to Council approving the budget on 5 February 2020,

(1) the following new capital proposals referred to in Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive:

- Sutherland Memorial Park ph 1 Calorifier replacement
- Sutherland Memorial Park main pavilion amenity club
- Sutherland Memorial Park cricket pavilion

be added to the General Fund Capital programme approved list and that the relevant officer be authorised to implement the schemes.

(2) the following new capital proposals referred to in Appendix 2 to the report:

- Investment property acquisition
- New house
- Energy & CO2 reduction in non-HRA properties
- Capital contingency fund

be added to the General Fund Capital programme provisional list and that these schemes, subject to the limits in the Financial Procedure Rules, be subject to a further report to the Executive, before being progressed.

(3) the following new capital proposals referred to in Appendix 2 to the report:

- LED lighting
- Car Parks Maintenance Reserve
- Air Source heat pump at Citizens Advice Bureau

be added to the General Fund Capital Programme approved list, to be funded by reserves, and that the relevant officer be authorised to implement the schemes.

- (4) the revenue implications of the new capital schemes referred to in paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) above be implemented in the relevant years stated in the bid.
- (5) the affordability limit for schemes to be funded by borrowing be set as per paragraph 4.32 in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (6) scheme ref ED38(p) relating to the North Street Development on the provisional capital programme be reduced to £2 million and any further scheme shall be subject to a new business case.

The Executive further

**RECOMMEND:**

- (1) That the General Fund capital estimates, as shown in Appendices 3 and 4 to the report submitted to the Executive (current approved and provisional schemes), as amended to include the bids approved by the Executive above, Appendix 5 (schemes funded from reserves) and Appendix 6 (s106 schemes), be approved.
- (2) That the Minimum Revenue Provision policy, referred to in section 5 of the report be approved.
- (3) That the capital and investment strategy be approved, specifically the Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators contained within the report and in Appendix 1.

**Reasons:**

- To enable the Council to approve the Capital and Investment strategy for 2020-21 to 2024-25
- To enable the Council, at its budget meeting, to approve the funding required for the new capital investment proposals

**EX89 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2020-21**

The Executive considered a report setting out the 2020-21 draft budget for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The 2020-21 estimates had been predicated on the assumptions, ambitions and priorities contained in the HRA business plan.

It was proposed to increase Council house rents by 2.7% in line with the Rent Standard 2020 (issued by the Regulator of Social Housing) and the Policy Statement for Rents on Social Housing (Issued by The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government).

A 2.7% increase in garage rents was also proposed from April 2020, based on the September 2019 Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%.

The report had also set out progress with the new build programme, together with the proposed investment programme in tenants' homes.

Having considered the draft HRA budget for 2020-21 and noted that the Joint EAB had also considered the report and had supported the recommendations, the Executive

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to Council approving the budget on 5 February 2020,

- (1) The projects forming the HRA major repairs and improvement programme, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.

- (2) The Director of Service Delivery be authorised, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing/Access and Disability, to reallocate funding between approved schemes to make best use of the available resources.
- (3) The Director of Service Delivery be authorised, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Housing/Access and Disability to set rents for new developments.

The Executive further

**RECOMMEND:**

- (1) That the HRA revenue budget, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.
- (2) That the 2.7% rent increase in line with the Rent Standard 2020 and Policy Statement 2019 be approved.
- (3) That the fees and charges for HRA services, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.
- (4) That a 2.7% increase in garage rents be approved.
- (5) That the Housing Investment Programme as shown in Appendix 4 (current approved and provisional schemes), be approved.

**Reasons:**

To enable the Council to set the rent charges for HRA property and associated fees and charges, along with authorising the necessary revenue and capital expenditure to implement a budget consistent with the objectives outlined in the HRA Business Plan.

**EX90 BUSINESS PLANNING - GENERAL FUND OUTLINE BUDGET 2020-21**

The Executive considered a report which outlined the proposed budget for 2019-20, which included a Council Tax requirement of £10,192,858 and a Council Tax increase of £5 per year (3.00%), resulting in a Band D charge of £176.82. As set out in the report, the Council expected to achieve a balanced budget for 2020-21.

The Council received the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS) for 2020-21 on 20 December 2019. The figures included in the outline budget presented to the Executive on 26 November 2019 reflected the information contained in the settlement.

The Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) consisted of the local share of business rates, and revenue support grant and was set out in the provisional LGFS. The settlement was in line with the Council's expectation which enabled it to retain £2.929m of business rates in 2020-21 an increase of 1.6% on 2019-20.

In determining that the Council's Core Spending Power had increased by 0.4%, the Government had assumed that Council Tax would be increased by the maximum amount permissible, namely, £5 or 3% whichever was the higher.

The Joint Executive Advisory Board Budget Task Group and Joint EAB had considered the outline budget at their meetings on 8 November and 20 November 2019 respectively.

The Chief Finance Officer's statutory report, which was also appended to the main report, provided information about the strategic context within which the budget had been prepared,

the medium-term financial plan, the robustness of the estimates, adequacy of reserves and budget risks.

The financial monitoring report for the first eight months of 2019-20 would be reported to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee on 15 January 2020. The Executive noted that projected net expenditure on the General Fund for the current financial year was estimated to be £96,766 less than the original estimate.

The Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service and the Leader of the Council would decide upon the appropriation of the final balance in June 2020. Any ongoing variances between actual expenditure and budget identified in 2019-20 had been taken into account when preparing the budget for 2020-21.

Having considered the draft budget, the Executive

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the transfer to reserves of the sums included in the proposed budget at Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.
- (2) That the growth bids, as set out in paragraph 10 of the report, be approved.

The Executive further

**RECOMMEND:**

- (1) That the proposed fees and charges for 2020-21 relating to General Fund services and attached at Appendix 3 to the report submitted to the Executive, be adopted with effect from 1 April 2020.
- (2) That the budget be approved, and specifically that the Council Tax requirement for 2020-21 be set at £10,192,858.
- (3) That the Band D Council Tax for 2020-21 be set at £176.82, an increase of £5 (3.00%).

Reason:

To enable the Council to set the Council Tax requirement and council tax for the 2020-21 financial year.

The meeting finished at 7.41 pm

Signed .....

Chairman

Date .....

# EXECUTIVE

18 February 2020

- \* Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- \* Councillor Fiona White (Vice-Chairman)

- |                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore   | * Councillor Julia McShane  |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | * Councillor John Rigg      |
| * Councillor David Goodwin  | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| Councillor Jan Harwood      | * Councillor James Steel    |

\*Present

Councillors Dennis Booth, Angela Gunning, George Potter, Maddy Redpath, Deborah Seabrook, Patrick Sheard, and Paul Spooner, were also in attendance.

## **EX91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Jan Harwood.

## **EX92 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

Councillors McShane, Reeves, Searle and White declared non-pecuniary interests in regard to Item 6 on the agenda in that:

Councillor McShane was a member of the management committee for CHIPS and was the Council appointee to the board of Guildford Action acting as trustee.

Councillor Reeves was a trustee of Guildford Action

Councillor Searle was a trustee of Reskilled and a patron of Homestart

Councillor White was a member of the management committee for CHIPS and was the Council appointee to the board of Guildford Citizens Advice acting as trustee.

## **EX93 MINUTES**

The Executive approved, as a correct record, the minutes of the meetings held on 7 and 21 January 2020. The Chairman signed the minutes.

## **EX94 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Following the implementation of Phase A of the Future Guildford Transformation Programme, which included the introduction of a new structure for the Corporate Management Team, the Leader intended to conduct a review of the Executive portfolios to ensure that there was a closer alignment with the new directorate responsibilities.

The Leader expressed concern about the safety of the brick-built bridge at Millmead Lock, following the recent flooding. This bridge was closed whilst a full structural investigation was being undertaken.

**EX95 WALNUT BRIDGE, GUILDFORD - CALL IN OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN ON 7 JANUARY 2020**

The Executive considered a report on the outcome of a review by Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) of the decision taken by the Executive at its meeting on 7 January 2020 in relation to additional funding for the Walnut Bridge project following a call in.

A presentation video was provided to illustrate the existing bridge and the proposed replacement.

At its special call in meeting on 4 February 2020, the OSC had explored the Executive's understanding of the project; whether the Executive had sufficient and accurate information, taken into account all relevant facts and assessed them properly; and considered whether the Executive had acted in accordance with the Constitution's principles of decision making.

OSC had resolved as follows:

- (1) That the proposed decision taken by the Executive on 7 January 2020 in connection with the Walnut Bridge project be not supported and that it be referred back to the next appropriate meeting of the Executive for reconsideration.
- (2) That, in considering the referral back of the proposed decision, the Executive be requested to take into account the following comments and advice from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
  - (a) To re-examine the financial arrangements with the LEP in terms of a possible further extension of the delivery deadline.
  - (b) To investigate the possible removal of the ramp from the bridge design with the aim of a cheaper, less permanent option to the proposed ramp, in order to better accommodate any changes that may arise from the Town Centre Masterplan process.
  - (c) Subject to the outcome of the discussions with the LEP, to take the opportunity of looking at the bridge design "in the round".
  - (d) To review the proposed decision on the Walnut Bridge project with consideration to the Town Centre Master Plan.
  - (e) To consider whether it would make sense for the Town Centre Masterplan to be progressed prior to a decision being made in respect of proceeding with the Walnut Bridge project.

In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 (f), the Executive was required to reconsider the proposed decision by taking into account the comments/ advice submitted by the OSC referred to above. It was noted that once a decision had been referred back to the Executive following a call-in, it could not be subject to further call-in.

The Executive was informed that following the OSC meeting, a meeting with a representative of the LEP was held on 11 February 2020 to explore and consider what options there might be with respect to the Local Growth Fund expenditure dates and conditions for completion of the Walnut Bridge Project. Arising from that meeting, the following options were available for the Executive's consideration:

- 1 To review the design of the Bridge/Ramp to address concerns raised on the bulk of the ramp specifically and the design of the bridge itself.

- 2 To decline to proceed with Scheme
- 3 To decline to proceed with scheme and resolve to incorporate bridge/public realm vision within the DPD, or informal Masterplan
- 4 To confirm the Executive's decision taken on 7 January 2020

Details of the four options, together with the considerations, advantages and risks associated with those options were set out on the Supplementary Information Sheet circulated at the meeting.

Other issues arising from the meeting with the LEP included the following:

- Funding for the Walnut Bridge project was via the Local Growth Fund, which required that expenditure be made by 31 March 2021.
- The LEP was under significant pressure to secure that projects were delivered, and expenditure completed, to time.
- Uncertainty as to whether alternative or supplemental funding may be available from the Government, so there was an imperative to direct funding to projects which would deliver by the 2021 date. LEP would seek to recover funding by way of clawback if the Council were to choose not to deliver the scheme.
- LEP may offer flexibility on the detailed design – but the delivery deadline, and the continued meeting of the funding award criteria (the growth, transport indicators etc) were mandatory. If the Council sought to modify the design then it (design, contractor appointment) would need to be deliverable within the timeframe.

During the discussion on the options open to the Executive and the risks associated with those options, it was noted that any decision not to proceed along the LEP timescale would leave the Council in a less favourable financial position to complete the project. Amongst the Executive, there remained mixed views of the proposed design. Due to the financial position, commitment to the current design of the bridge was required at this point in time with acceptance that this commitment would be made before discussion of other public realm design projects that were in the pipeline.

Having taken into account the OSC's comments and advice and the options now open to the Council, the Executive

RESOLVED: That its decision taken on 7 January 2020 in respect of this matter be confirmed.

Reason:

To ensure compliance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

**EX96 ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GRANTS 2020-21**

The Lead Councillor for Community Health, Support and Wellbeing introduced the report asking the Executive to approve grants to community and voluntary organisations for 2020-21 as proposed by the Council's Grants Panel.

Having noted the advice of the Community EAB, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the allocation of community grants for 2020-21, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.
- (2) That the sum of £50,495 be transferred from the community grants budget to the budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2020-21.
- (3) That the allocation of grant funding to voluntary organisations for 2020-21, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

Reason:

To enable the grants process for 2020-21 to be implemented.

## **EX97 TOWN CENTRE CCTV EQUIPMENT UPGRADE**

The Executive, having considered a report on the need to update much of the Town Centre CCTV cameras and associated equipment to ensure the system continued to operate to the highest standards and to seek authority to undertake the necessary procurement

RESOLVED That the Town Centre CCTV Equipment Upgrade project be moved from the provisional to the approved list of the General Fund Capital Programme.

Reasons:

- To improve public safety and improve protection from and detection of crime.
- To approve to move the Town Centre CCTV Equipment Upgrade project from the provisional to the approved list of the General Fund Capital Programme.

## **EX98 PAPERLESS MEETINGS**

The Executive noted that the Council faced a number of significant challenges particularly in respect of meeting its responsibilities following the declaration of a climate emergency in July 2019. In addition, as part of the Future Guildford transformation programme, it was proposed to achieve savings and efficiencies by reducing print and postage costs through the introduction of paperless meetings. To this end, councillors and officers had received ICT devices with the necessary functionality and software to enable them to read and annotate agendas electronically including the necessary training on how the devices and software operated.

The Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service introduced the report and was in support of a clean break option to paperless for all councillors from April of this year.

Some councillors present had reservations in regard to conducting their duties for certain committees such as Planning where agenda packs could be very large and complex. It was also suggested that councillors would print their agendas at home instead if they felt there was a need which would negate any reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions achieved by the Council. It was further suggested that paper copies could be required under such circumstances where devices, internet connections, or the Modern.Gov app failed. Councillors were assured that suitable provision was in place.

Although transition would be more challenging for some councillors and officers than for others, the Executive considered it was right to proceed as long as there was additional training in place and that there would be a review of the decision after a certain time period.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That, subject to paragraph (3) below and with effect from 7 April 2020,

- (a) the Council will no longer provide to councillors, officers, Honorary Freemen, Honorary Aldermen, or the public, any printed copy agendas, minutes, order papers, supplementary information sheets (Late Sheets) for Council, Executive, Committee, Sub-Committee, Board, Working Group or Task Group meetings; and
  - (b) all officer level meetings shall be paperless.
- (2) That officers continue to support councillors in the understanding and operation of their new devices and the Modern.Gov app, including arranging a repeater session of the training given to councillors on 16 December.
  - (3) That the Council shall provide in respect of each meeting to which the public would be entitled to attend referred to in paragraph (1) (a) above:
    - (a) one hard copy agenda for viewing by the public at the main reception of the Council offices following publication of the agenda, and
    - (b) six hard copy agendas for viewing by the public at any such meeting.
  - (4) That the measures referred to above be introduced on a trial basis for six months and reviewed thereafter.

**Recommendation to Council (7 April 2020):**

That the following amendment be made to paragraph 1 (Scope) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 4 of the Constitution:

“Reference in these procedure rules to the making available or supply of copies of any agenda and reports, or any other written material submitted to the Council, Executive, Board, Committee or Sub-Committee shall include the provision of such copies by electronic means.”

Reasons:

To deliver on the Council’s commitments to secure ongoing savings in its revenue budget and to assist in achieving the Council’s corporate aspirations to reduce its carbon footprint, whilst still complying with legislation requiring the provision of copy agendas for inspection by the public.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19 (e), Councillor Fiona White requested that her vote against the above decision be recorded.

**EX99 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Executive

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**EX100 NORTH STREET DEVELOPMENT GUILDFORD**

The Executive welcomed a report setting out a future development option for North Street. The Lead Councillor for Major Projects introduced the report and explained that the proposals put forward could revitalise this area of the town centre, provide greater diversity of use and

support modal shift. Having noted that those aspirations were compatible with the Council's Corporate Plan and Local Plan, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Managing Director be authorised, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service to agree terms for the sale of the Council's freehold interests in sites within the North Street Development area described in the report submitted to the Executive, subject to:
- (a) the commercial agreement being conditional upon St Edward achieving planning consent for an acceptable scheme: a substantial residential-led mixed-use scheme with ground floor retail, leisure, and community uses;
  - (b) the Managing Director, Chief Finance Officer, Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Leader of the Council, and the Lead Councillor being satisfied with the advice received from the property, cost, and legal advisers as to the financial viability of the proposed scheme and all other terms; and
  - (c) the Managing Director and Leader of the Council, being satisfied with:
    - (i) the advice of the Council Solicitor in respect of the proposed contractual arrangements; and
    - (ii) other due diligence undertaken in respect of the St Edward's proposal.
- (2) That the sum of £500,000 be transferred from the provisional to the approved capital programme to enable a legal agreement to be reached with the developer for the sale of the Council's interests in the site.

Reasons:

To support the Council's policies set out in its Corporate Plan 2018-2023, The Local Plan 2015-2034 and Guildford Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2017 to "facilitate the delivery of a major new mixed-use development on North Street incorporating a significant number of new homes and public realm improvements.

The meeting finished at 8.20 pm

Signed .....

Date

Chairman

# STATEMENT OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Tuesday 24 March 2020

The matters referred to below were due to be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 24 March 2020. Due to the coronavirus crisis, the meeting was cancelled. Under Section 9E (2) (a) of the Local Government Act 2000, the Leader of the Council may take executive decisions.

The decisions summarised below were taken by the Leader of the Council on 24 March 2020 and, subject to the call-in procedure referred to in Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17 and to the Notes at the end of this document, shall have effect five working days after the date on which this statement was published. Details of any recommendations to Council are also included for completeness.

Other members of the Executive, councillors and members of the public were invited to submit any representations in writing that they would have made at the meeting, which the Leader took into account when making these decisions.

<b>Agenda Item No.</b>	<b>Officer(s) to action Item</b>
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<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>
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Not applicable.

<b>2</b>	<b>LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST</b>
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There were no declarations of interest by the Leader.

<b>3</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>
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Not applicable.

<b>4</b>	<b>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>
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Not applicable.

<b>5</b>	<b>FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF CHANTRY WOOD CAMPSITE</b>
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Decision:

(1) That the Chantry Wood Campsite continues in its current form with increased fees as set out in "Option B2" of the report submitted to the Executive.

Hendryk Jurk

(2) That the Council continues to engage with forest school operators to explore options to increase outdoor education whilst maintaining a camping facility.

Reason:

To implement arrangements at the campsite that respond to the views

expressed during the consultation that protects the natural environment and reduces the operational cost to the Council.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

Option B1 Basic facilities run by GBC

Option B3 Basic Facilities – run by volunteers

Option B4 Basic facilities – run by forest school

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors, public or officers:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

Given the latest strictures from HMG over the last few days, I don't feel it appropriate to take any decision at this current point in time.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

EAB asked for the possibility of providing improved disabled facilities be investigated. Whilst the consultation had not revealed a great demand, that may be because respondents were self-selecting and it does not appear any attempt was made to ask disabled people if they were interested in using the site or what they would need to be able to do so. It may well be that any adaptations necessary would go far beyond 'reasonable adjustment' and hence be unachievable/ affordable. However, it would be good to see this point considered.

Leader's response:

We are deferring consideration of access improvements as the camp site can't be booked now and we will look at this when we are in a position to use it, when we know if the Forest School are interested and we will also review the booking system when the IT is in place.

Cllr George Potter (non-Exec member):

An issue that residents have raised with me is that the booking system for the campsite is likely to be a major contributory factor to its low usage.

At present all bookings must be made a year in advance and there is no online calendar to show the availability of the campsite. There is also no deposit required for making a booking. This effectively encourages people to make speculative bookings well in advance and then to simply cancel, or not show up, for bookings that they no longer want or need. The resultant booking vacancies aren't filled, however, because others who wish to book the site have no way of knowing that these vacancies exist.

Indeed, residents have told me that when calling to make booking enquiries staff have declined to tell them what dates are available and instead residents have resorted to asking about each calendar date in turn until they get to one to which the answer is "it's available".

If charges are going to increase then a priority must be to get a better booking system that encourages, rather than discourages, use of the

campsite.

Additionally, I would strongly support the prioritisation of rebuild/ adaptations to the toilet blocks to make them more disabled accessible. This should be prioritised ahead of works such as the refurbishment of the barn interior as, at present, the interior is predominantly used by the parks department for storage and is rarely used by public bookings.

Finally, residents have reported a belief that the campsite appears to periodically be used for internal corporate bookings by GBC. If this is indeed the case it should be the case that these bookings are cross-charged appropriately so that this usage is accurately recorded in figures which purport to show the usage of the campsite.

Leader's response:

- a) Corona Virus:  
The campsite is currently shut due to Corona Virus as we cannot provide basic sanitation and gatherings are discouraged as per government advice.
- b) The Booking system:  
A new online booking system is planned as part of the Future Guildford project. This could show a bookings calendar and include a deposit payment.
- c) Level of usage:  
The level of usage is determined by the single party booking, not the booking system. This is due to the current toilet system. The water infrastructure in the area would require upgrading in order to address this. This was considered in the Executive Report in 8 January 2019. The public consultation established that there is no public support for this scale of investment.
- d) Staff not being able to say what vacancies are available:  
In the winter we have maintained a waiting list as booking dates were not confirmed pending this decision on the future operation. In order to avoid any confusion, we neither offered nor confirmed that bookings on specific dates are available.
- e) More accessible toilets:  
Full disabled access cannot be achieved, as this would depend on water pressure availability. The water infrastructure in the area would require upgrading in order to address this. The public consultation established that there is no public support for this scale of investment. Some improvements can be delivered. The scope would determine the time required to address Green Belt/ Building regulations. Due to the nature of the surrounding site the current requirement for disabled access is low. A balance would need to be struck between effort and outcome, as the measures that are possible to be delivered within the current constraints may not be sufficient to provide greater accessibility.
- f) It is correct the campsite is occasionally booked for internal use. Cross charging would impact on the cost of other Council services, for example the Play Rangers.

**BURCHATTS FARM BARN CAR PARK, STOKE PARK**Decision:

To defer the decision until a later date.

Sally Astles

Reason(s):

The parking assessment will be redone and so this was not an urgent piece of work to be undertaken at this point in time.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

To proceed with the project by transferring monies from the provisional to approved capital programme.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

Given the latest strictures from HMG over the last few days, I feel we should postpone this decision until the HMG has made its decision regarding infrastructure developments /building workers clearer.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Agreed in principle. However, I have 3 points:

1. Should we re-prioritise the capital programme in view of current unprecedented circumstances?
2. If/ when the works go ahead, priority should be given to maintaining spaces for use by Disability challengers during the works. Others can walk.
3. Only 3 cycle stands are mentioned in section 3.10. Given we are trying to increase sustainable travel, we should be making it easier for people to cycle, especially urban saints, Guildfordians etc.

Leader's response:

We will review the whole proposal because officers have informed us the parking assessment will have to be redone before we are able to start the work. Cycling can be reviewed then.

Cllr John Redpath (non-Exec member):

I am concerned about the charges for surfacing Burchatts car park. This is a huge amount of money for this area. Has it been properly tendered and is it for all the currently unsurfaced areas such as Challengers, the Barn demise etc?

Even then it's excessive.

Leader's response:

- It is an estimate to allow the formal tendering process to be undertaken. We cannot go through a tendering process without first getting authority to spend the money. Our engineers have allowed for a generous contingency of 15%, so there is a good chance the final cost will be less. We do not want to underestimate the final cost in case we do not have enough funds and

end up having to go back to the Executive.

- Our engineers have based the cost on current contractor rates and these rates are from contractors on the cheaper end of the scale. The cost includes the following:
  - Preliminaries, restrictive working, traffic management
  - SUDS drainage works
  - Earthworks
  - Block paving construction
  - Tarmac construction
  - Kerbs, edgings
  - Consultants: CDM, QS and Engineering design time
  - Contingencies, 15% of works.

## 7 PROPERTY INVESTMENT STRATEGY

### Decision:

To defer the decision to a future meeting of the Executive.

Melissa  
Bromham

### Reason(s):

To reconsider when there can be a full discussion with members of the Executive and where the confidential Appendix 3 can be considered which it had been intended to circulate with a Late Sheet prior to the meeting being cancelled.

### Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

1. To approve the Property Investment Strategy.
2. To approve the delegation of authority to the Head of Asset Management in consultation with the Director of Strategic Services, the Chief Financial Officer and the Lead Member for Finance, Asset Management and Customer Services, to acquire property within the set parameters of the strategy.

### Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

### Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

#### Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

Given the latest strictures from HMG over the last few days, I don't feel it appropriate to take any decision at this current point in time.

#### Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Does this need reappraising in the light of the current circumstances? It is extremely difficult to discern what is going to be a good investment at this time but perhaps green energy projects provide more certainty. I attended the big energy summit and am in the course of writing a note on this topic.

### Leader's response:

This isn't making it a priority to spend on property, current events will change all sorts of investment portfolios and all this does is allow for an action if deemed necessary.

**8 GUILDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2020**

Decision:

That the Local Development Scheme, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive be adopted with effect from 1 April 2020.

Stuart  
Harrison,

Reason:

To progress the new Guildford borough Local Plan: development management policies by having a Local Development Scheme (LDS) with an up to date timetable for the Local Plan.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

None.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

This is probably inappropriate at this time.

Leader response:

This is not a radical decision that might be impacted by the Covid-19 situation and is required in order to move forward with the proposed consultation on the Development Management Policies approval of which will be required from Full Council.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Agrees with recommendation

**9 REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION ON LOCAL PLAN: DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

Recommendation to Council:

- (1) That the draft Local Plan: Development Management Policies document, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive, be put before Full Council on 7 April 2020 for approval for Regulation 18 public consultation and to approve a seven-week period of consultation beginning on 20 April 2020.
- (2) That the Planning Policy Manager be authorised to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the document as he may determine in consultation with the Lead Councillor.

Stuart  
Harrison,

Reason(s):

Undertaking a public consultation on the draft Local Plan is a statutory requirement placed on Local Planning Authorities under Regulation 18 of

the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and will enable the Council to move closer to adopting the second part of the Local Plan.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

None.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

I can see little point recommendation to the Full Council Meeting that seems highly unlikely to occur.

Leader's response:

We can move this item through to Full Council whilst we await guidance from Government on how we will be able to progress business during this challenging time.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Overall, I am supportive of this document and appreciate the work that has gone into it. However, I and other councillors participated in the EAB which considered this document on 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. We have also made written submissions. Whilst the document summarises EAB comments, short of going through the document for that meeting and the current document, it is difficult to ascertain what changes have been made as a result of any councillor written representations etc. It does not feel like the officers really pay much attention.

Leader's response:

I will ask the Planning Policy Manager to comment on and perhaps highlight specifically in the report to Council any changes made to the document as a result of councillors' written representations.

**10**

## **TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN**

Decision:

- (1) That a Town Centre Masterplan Programme Board be established and chaired by Councillor John Rigg.
- (2) That a procurement specialist be appointed for the purpose of a delivery led town centre project who will advise the Council on the recruitment of a team of specialists, including planners, to lead on the delivery of a portfolio of projects that will together contribute to the comprehensive regeneration of Guildford town centre, and be responsible for delivering the projects that are identified as supporting the future of the Town Centre as well as the evidence base that will inform an aspirational document to explore the development potential of the Town Centre.

Andrew  
Tyldesley

Reason:

To support the implementation of the resolution in Council minute C029.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

To not approve the recommendation thereby delaying the delivery of a strategy for the improvement of Guildford Town Centre.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

I am happy to support this proposal.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Agree with the recommendation.

11

**PAPERLESS MEETINGS**

Decision:

That Option B, as set out below, be implemented:

John  
Armstrong

To adopt a “paper-light” approach to meetings, which would have paperless meetings as an aspiration, but recognise that councillors should still have a choice between using their devices and the functionality of the Modern.Gov app or continuing to receive paper copy agendas; and in respect of the latter, the basis upon which paper copies will be provided will be as follows:

- Paper copy Council agendas and order papers will only be provided to councillors who ‘opt in’ to receive them and, similarly, paper copy committee agendas and supplementary information (late) sheets will only be provided to members of a committee and substitutes who ‘opt in’ to receive them
- Paper copy agendas will be placed in councillors’ pigeon-holes unless they ‘opt in’ to have them sent by first class post
- The ‘opt in’ requirements to also apply in respect of agendas for working groups, task groups, and task and finish groups involving councillors

Reason(s):

To work towards delivering on the Council’s commitments to secure ongoing savings in its revenue budget and to assist in achieving the Council’s corporate aspirations to reduce its carbon footprint, whilst still complying with legislation requiring the provision of copy agendas for inspection by the public.

Options considered and rejected by the Leader of the Council:

Option A – confirm original decision taken by Executive on 18 February 2020.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader and any dispensation granted:

None.

Details of any written submissions received and considered by the Leader from other members of the Executive, councillors or public:

Cllr Patrick Sheard (non-Exec member):

I'm happy with this proposal, though I see little point in having paper agendas in pigeon-holes / via post unless there is a further choice to not having them at all (Or some procedural / legal requirement for these to be distributed)

Leader's response:

Option B emphasises that there is an initial presumption of paperless meetings, subject to the "opt in" provisions outlined above. Councillors not wishing to have agendas should not therefore opt in.

Cllr Deborah Seabrook (non-Exec member):

Agrees with the recommendation.