

JOINT EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

9 January 2020

- * Councillor John Redpath (Chairman)
- * Councillor Angela Gunning (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Paul Abbey | Councillor Ted Mayne |
| Councillor Jon Askew | * Councillor Ann McShee |
| * Councillor Christopher Barrass | * Councillor Masuk Miah |
| Councillor Ruth Brothwell | * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty |
| * Councillor Graham Eyre | Councillor George Potter |
| * Councillor Andrew Gomm | Councillor Jo Randall |
| * Councillor Gillian Harwood | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| Councillor Liz Hogger | Councillor Will Salmon |
| * Councillor Gordon Jackson | * Councillor Deborah Seabrook |
| * Councillor Diana Jones | * Councillor Patrick Sheard |
| * Councillor Steven Lee | * Councillor Bob McShee |
| Councillor Ted Mayne | Councillor Joss Bigmore |
| | Councillor Caroline Reeves |

* Present

Councillor Joss Bigmore was also in attendance.

7 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Joint Executive Advisory Board (EAB)

RESOLVED

that Councillor John Redpath be elected as Chairman for this meeting.

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ruth Brothwell, Liz Hogger, Ted Mayne, George Potter, Jo Randall and Will Salmon. Councillor Bob McShee was present as a substitute for Councillor Ruth Brothwell.

9 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND NOTIFICATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests or non-pecuniary interests.

10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint EAB held on 20 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

**11 CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020-21 TO 2024-25
CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020-21 TO 2024-25**

The Board considered a report which detailed the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy, including the new capital programme bids, plus the requirements of the Prudential Code and the Investment Strategy covering treasury management investments, commercial

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investments and the requirements of the Treasury Management Code and of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Statutory Guidance.

The related presentation of the Lead Specialist (Finance) introduced and provided the context to the Capital and Investment Strategy and invited comments and questions in respect of each capital bid. The introduction stated the requirement to prepare a capital strategy which, in the Council's case, was its Capital and Investment Strategy that linked together the capital programme, asset investment and treasury management. The related process involved reviewing the balance sheet, which was the commencement point, considering the capital programme as this impacted on the balance sheet and then identifying how to fund the capital programme which informed the treasury management function. In terms of context, the capital programme was split into the three areas of business as usual (BAU), development financial and development non-financial. The affordability limit of BAU schemes was linked to increases in the Council Tax each year. The total capital programme was currently £407 million gross expenditure with new bids totalling £49 million. There was an underlying need to borrow £290 million rising to £338 million should the new bids be approved for inclusion in the capital programme.

Having received the notes of the Joint EAB Budget Task Group meeting held on 19 December 2019, the Board considered the new capital bids and commented as follows:

1. Sutherland Memorial Park - Phase 1 Calorifier (Water Heater) Replacement

The Board indicated its support for this bid without further comment.

2. Sutherland Memorial Park Main Pavilion Amenity Club - Refurbishment Works

This bid was accepted by the Board without comment.

3. Sutherland Memorial Park Cricket Pavilion - Internal Alteration and Refurbishment

A member of the Joint EAB Budget Task Group advised that the Group's queries relating to this bid had been answered and a revised bid had been submitted.

4. Property Acquisition Fund

This bid had been adjusted to reflect the Investment Property Fund Management Group's consideration of the Council's policies in terms of climate change and ethical investments and to address related issues. Additional priority would be given to investments with "green" credentials.

5. Phase 4 Public Realm Scheme

This bid had been withdrawn

6. New House – Refurbishment of Office Space

The Board noted that this project had attracted rental income of £1.1 million.

7. Climate Change & Energy Project Funding – Consolidated Bid

The Board supported this bid which sought a budget to fund Climate Change and Energy related projects. The bid was at an early stage and related priorities and projects and would be developed. Measuring of current emissions was currently taking place to inform future work.

8. Installation of LED lighting to various community sites

This bid was supported by the Board without comment.

9. Multi-storey Car Park Repairs and Maintenance

The Board was advised that this was a regular car park maintenance bid.

10. Installation of Air Source Heat Pump Heating and Hot Water System to the Citizens Advice Bureau

As there were two Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) in the Borough, a councillor requested that this bid identify which CAB it related to. A member of the Joint EAB Budget Task Group requested that the Group receive more detailed information relating to bids at an earlier stage in future years to facilitate consideration.

The following additional points were made in relation to the report:

- The expansion and improvement of the Aldershot Road allotment site involved inclusion of allotments from the Bellfields site in connection with the Weyside Urban Village development.
- Checks would be made to ascertain whether the Mill Lane, Pirbright, Flood Protection Scheme had been abandoned.
- The estimate associated with Pre-SANG costs of bringing forward sites was generic and had been in the budget for a number of years. Officers would be asked if this capital programme item was still required.
- The need for an estimate in respect of the removal of barns and concrete hardstanding from land at Tyting Farm was questioned and would be checked.
- The estimate relating to the replacement of the Spectrum roof was an old bid and the works were in the latter phases and nearing completion.
- The difference between the mid-year and year end Liability Benchmarks was the Council's minimum liquidity requirement of £45 million. The Liability Benchmark was reducing in line with assumed increases in reserves and payments. The mid-year position showed greater liquidity than the year end level.

12 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET REPORT 2020-21 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET REPORT 2020-21

Councillors were invited to consider a report which outlined the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2020-21 and made recommendations to the Executive regarding both the HRA revenue and capital programme budgets. The HRA was ring-fenced from other Council activities.

The 2020-21 estimates were 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 plus 1%.

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

The Board noted that there were currently 5,200 tenants and that disposals via take up of the Right to Buy option were projected to rise to 15 in 2020-21.

The following points arose from questions and discussion:

- Definitions of social and affordable housing and shared equity etc were provided in the Housing Strategy and would be circulated to the Board.
- Energy savings could be measured and it was thought that the energy bills of tenants in receipt of green energy had reduced by approximately 50%.
- Discussions regarding funding sources for new build housing at the proposed Weyside Urban Village were ongoing.
- The need for resurfacing garage forecourt areas to garage blocks where existing surface was in poor condition as a continuation of a planned maintenance programme was questioned and further details would be provided.
- During the last four years the HRA had invested over £21 million and delivered 128 new homes for local residents.
- A breakdown of the HRA expenditure in 2020-21 would be provided to distinguish between planned and responsive maintenance costs.
- The cost of democracy represented the amount of the cost of Councillors, meetings, and other democratic functions attributed to the HRA.
- The grant relating to supported housing was funded by Surrey County Council.
- There were some delays associated with payment of Universal Credit (UC) and some Council Tax and rent arrears had occurred owing to UC. New benefit claimants would receive UC whereas existing claimants were due to migrate from housing and other benefits to UC from 2018-19 and this process would continue until 2022 when it was anticipated that all working age claimants would have transferred to UC.
- The difference between Sheltered Housing and Supported Housing was that the former consisted of an on-site presence to offer assistance if needed and the latter featured home care.

The Board indicated its agreement with the recommendations to the Executive.

13 NEW CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND CORPORATE PLAN NEW CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND PLAN

The Board considered a report which sought its views in respect of the proposed new draft corporate priorities and the outline timetable for developing a new corporate plan in order to support the Council with the development of new corporate priorities and a corporate plan to provide the strategic framework for managing its business and resources effectively. The Executive would be invited to agree the priorities for public consultation purposes at its meeting on 21 January 2020.

Although the Council approved its current Corporate Plan for the period 2018 to 2023 at its meeting on 15 May 2018, since the Borough Council elections in May 2019, members of the Executive had discussed new corporate priorities and these had been the subject of a workshop for all councillors held on 13 November 2019.

The following points arose from questions, comments and discussion:

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- The Citizens' Panel was a demographically balanced consultative group with a membership of 1,000 people selected by a company to be representative of the local population in terms of age, gender etc and not exclude any group.
- The consultation in respect of the corporate priorities would include an online survey to ensure that all residents and stakeholders had an opportunity to submit views and a telephone survey to provide a representative response to the identified priorities.
- Although the priorities were generally supported and would be further developed with refined and focused outcomes, the following comments were made:
 - the priority "Providing the housing that people need" should be more clearly defined to reflect the need for affordable housing located in the urban areas to protect the greenbelt.
 - the wording of the priority "Regenerating Guildford town centre" should include a reference to producing a town centre masterplan to guide regeneration in order to make Guildford a nicer place for people to live and work.
 - There should be a priority "Making it easier for people to live and work closer together" to reduce commuting and congestion whilst tackling climate change.
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14 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Joint EAB

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of Appendices 2 and 3 of the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

15 BIKE SHARE SCHEME

Following the exclusion of the public and press, the Senior Policy Officer – Planning Policy (Transport) presented a report providing a briefing in respect of the feasibility study and commercial viability of the public bike share scheme for Guildford and an update regarding the commissioning of the project. The Council's project consultant, Mark Strong, was also present.

The report explained that the Place-making and Innovation EAB had considered elements of the feasibility study and progress with progressing the bike share scheme at its meeting held on 21 October 2019. These elements were the Council's revised proposal to deliver Phase A of the scheme, the consultant's recommendations for the scheme and the consultant's draft plans for the Guildford cycle network as identified in the route assessments feasibility study. This further briefing responded to the request from that EAB for an opportunity to consider the commercial viability of the scheme.

The primary aims of the feasibility study were to consider the commercial viability of a bike share scheme in Guildford and allow the Council to make a decision on whether to progress a scheme; to assess compatibility with the existing University of Surrey scheme; and, if a decision was taken to proceed with a bike share scheme, to provide initial information and guidance to instigate the procurement process. The assessment of the commercial viability of a Guildford bike share scheme was set out in Appendix 2 to the report which was exempt from publication. An update in respect of the commissioning of the project was provided in Appendix 3 to the report which was also exempt from publication.

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In order to inform the further development of the project to deliver a bike share scheme in Guildford, which was included in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023, the report recommended that the Board noted and provided comment on the consultant's assessment of the commercial viability of a bike share scheme and on the update regarding the commissioning of the project.

The following points arose from related questions and discussion:

- Research concerning a bike share scheme in Guildford had featured two meetings with local stakeholders and learning from experiences of similar schemes in other towns.
- Transport for London, benefiting from a significant scheme development budget, had undertaken market research that other localities had not.
- In addition to students, many people of all ages made every day trips and would gain health benefits from cycling.
- The road safety impact was raised as a possible concern. The Board was advised that bikes in share schemes were well maintained and safe, often more so than private bikes. Wearing of protective clothing was not required by law and there was evidence that cyclists who wore cycle helmets had a more risk-averse approach to cycling than those who did not. Reference was made to the research into the driving behaviour of motorists overtaking cyclists wearing helmets and those who were bareheaded.
- The outputs from the route assessments feasibility study could be used in the evidence base to inform the preparation of a policy on the improvement of the cycle network for the part 2 Local Plan (Development Management Policies), which would also draw on Surrey CC's (the Local Transport Authority) Guildford Local Cycling Plan.
- Experience showed that the provision of a good network of cycle routes was a key factor in how well a bike share scheme was used. The Council bike share scheme did not include improvements to cycle routes.
- A bike share scheme in Guildford may not be attractive to potential users owing to the topography and nature of the town and its population profile. Market research could assist with determining the feasibility and viability of a scheme.
- A bike share scheme may be of interest to the numerous companies located at Guildford Business Park which currently chartered buses to transport their employees.
- The Sustainable Movement Corridor running across the town from east to west could be utilised by cyclists including those using Council bike share scheme. If a Guildford bike share scheme proved to be successful, then this could provide impetus for Surrey County Council to improve cycle routes in Guildford.
- Security issues, such as vandalism or theft of cycles, was known to have been a problem, and in one city this had been gang related. Early liaison with the police would assist with tackling any issues.
- The bikes would be electric and feature GPS tracking devices which would enable an operator to know their location and levy fines for out of area use.
- The Department of Transport appraisal tool had indicated that the scheme would achieve three benefits for every £1 invested which was higher than some other areas.
- The proposed scheme was financially viable and all operational risk could be contractually attributed to the operator. The potential for the Council to seek to arrange a profit share with an operator was welcomed by councillors.
- Although some negative views concerning the proposed scheme had been expressed, some councillors highlighted the positive aspects such as health benefits and reduction in pollution and congestion which would help to tackle climate change. It was felt that issues raised at an earlier stage had now been addressed by the consultant.

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In conclusion, the Board agreed to recommend to the Executive that the University of Surrey be approached with a view to seeking a financial contribution towards the bike share scheme.

The meeting finished at 9.15 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman

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