

# EXECUTIVE

16 July 2019

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

Councillor Joss Bigmore  
\* Councillor Angela Goodwin  
\* Councillor David Goodwin  
\* Councillor Jan Harwood

\* Councillor Julia McShane  
\* Councillor Susan Parker  
Councillor Pauline Searle  
\* Councillor James Steel

\*Present

Councillors Paul Abbey, Chris Blow, Dennis Booth Colin Cross Angela Gunning Ted Mayne John Rigg, Tony Rooth, and Deborah Seabrook were also in attendance.

## **EX14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Joss Bigmore, Pauline Searle, and Fiona White.

## **EX15 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest.

## **EX16 MINUTES**

The Executive approved, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2019. The Chairman signed the minutes.

## **EX17 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements from the Leader.

## **EX18 REDEVELOPMENT OF WESTBOROUGH AND PARK BARN PLAY AREAS**

The Executive considered a report which set out proposals to improve play provision in the Westborough/Park Barn area through a review of the play areas known as Kings College, Chapelhouse, Woodside Road and Derby Road. The report indicated how the proposal aligned with several Council strategies and strategic priorities and why there was a need for play area improvements.

The Guildford Play Strategy 2016-2021 had sought to provide better opportunities for play for all ages and abilities and included an action plan of refurbishment for all the Council's play areas. The area of Westborough/Park Barn was next for review.

The report included an assessment of the quantity of play space for different ages and highlighted some inequalities in play provision, namely in play facilities for older children, that this project would seek to address.

Quality, attractive play areas are essential to increase levels of physical activity, improve children's wellbeing, promote imagination, develop skills, including social cohesion and learn about the environment. Access to green spaces (including play spaces) had been found to be associated with more people with a healthy weight, improved mental health and longer lives. The Executive noted that Westborough was one of England's most deprived neighbourhoods and statistics showed 18.4% of children were in low-income families,

compared to Guildford's average of 9.4%, and there was a high rate of obesity amongst some ages of children.

The ward currently had some uninspiring and tired play areas, some of which were poorly used. Residents had also raised concerns about safety, which required further exploration. Some of the play areas could be better located with 'greener' links between them. The refurbishment project would seek residents' views through two stages of consultation, the first of which was completed at the end of May 2019. It would involve several of the Council's teams to ensure that play spaces that residents would use and enjoy were provided, as well as making the best use of the available funds. The Council's Communications and PR Team would support the consultations and project progress.

The Executive was informed that there was £320,000 remaining in the provisional capital programme (PL20p) for the playground refurbishment programme. It was anticipated that all this sum would be required for the Westborough ward, partly due to a lack of other finances such as s106 developer's funds earmarked for this ward.

Having considered the proposals, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) To proceed with a review of the quantity, location and use of the areas known as Kings College, Chapelhouse, Woodside Road and Derby Road play areas through consultation.
- (2) To move the provisional capital sum of £320,000 (PL20p) to the approved capital programme to be spent on improvements to the areas described in the report submitted to the Executive.
- (3) To explore the potential for access and use of land known as Wey Valley College on Southway to increase the quantity of play provision, particularly for older children, in Westborough as described in paragraph 6.5 of the report.
- (4) To delegate the decision for approving the final schemes to the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Health & Wellbeing, the Voluntary Sector, Grants Panel, Play Strategy and Project Aspire.

Reason:

To enable the action plan from Guildford's Play Strategy to proceed by investing in the play areas within the Westborough/Park Barn area as the next priority areas for improvement.

## **EX19 PUBLIC TOILET REVIEW**

The Executive noted that, during 2018, a thorough review of the provision of public toilets in Guildford was undertaken. This review had found that there was a comprehensive and well-used service with clear plans for future maintenance. The outcome of this review was taken to the Community Executive Advisory Board (CEAB) on 18 October 2018, to seek their views on the future of the facilities and to explore a number of options, which had informed the recommendations to the Executive.

The Executive considered a report, which included a copy of the detailed report to the CEAB at its 18 October 2018 meeting, and the CEAB's recommendations in respect of the various options.

The Executive noted further detailed information including a report from Healthmatic, setting out the results of a usage survey and associated general advice, and a condition report from Property Services setting out the condition of all facilities and their future maintenance and refurbishment cycle and costs.

In considering this matter, the following points were made:

- The pop-up urinals in North Street were currently functional but in view of their age, they would require replacement in the next two years
- Disabled users would need a RADAR key to access the Council's disabled toilets but there were alternative options for disabled users in many of the shops and restaurants in the town
- The need for more unisex toilets had been highlighted in the report, but it was recognised that there were difficulties in converting older buildings for this purpose
- The proposed Changing Places toilet was particularly welcomed
- More baby changing facilities were requested

Having considered the report, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current free provision of toilets, with the exception of the Home Farm toilet, be maintained.
- (2) That, subject to the outcome of a public consultation on the closure of the Home Farm toilet, the Waste, Parking and Fleet Services Manager, in consultation with the relevant lead councillor, be authorised to determine whether that toilet should be closed.
- (3) That the Council financially supports the provision of a Changing Places toilet in partnership with a retail partner to a maximum of £10,000.

Reason:

To continue to provide a comprehensive range of public toilet facilities throughout the borough, supporting visitors to the borough's many attractions and facilities.

## **EX20      REPLACEMENT OF THE WASTE AND RECYCLING FLEET**

The Executive considered a report which informed councillors that the Government was currently reviewing its national waste strategy, the results of which would be known next summer. Changes were expected to be implemented between 2023 and 2026 and this was likely to include a requirement to change collection services.

There were also changes taking place in the global markets for recyclable materials and as a result of savings being required by the Waste Disposal Authority, Surrey County Council. These would have an impact on the cost of the Borough Council's waste and recycling services.

The Borough Council, however, needed to replace its existing collection fleet in 2020. Given the uncertainties, Officers had identified a fleet configuration that would allow the continuation of the service in its current form, but which would be sufficiently flexible to respond to changes required in response to the new national waste strategy, changed market conditions and financial pressures.

The options for the procurement of sustainable vehicles had been explored, but at this time there were no suitable, tested electric or hydrogen fuelled vehicles available on the market. In addition, issues with the current infrastructure in supporting these vehicles in the short term had been identified. The Council currently had nine electric vehicles on fleet, but expanding this to include the refuse collection vehicles would require a significant and costly infrastructure upgrade to the depot site that had a lifetime of just three years remaining. Infrastructure to support the use of electric and hydrogen fuelled vehicles had, however, been added to the new depot planned for as part of the Slyfield Area Regeneration Project.

In considering this matter, the following points were made:

- The proposal to replace the fleet would not affect current waste and recycling collection processes
- Used fleet vehicles would typically be auctioned and some would be exported for use in other countries and others used as hire vehicles in this country
- Manufacturers of fleet vehicles were constantly improving the vehicles in terms of efficiency and impact on the environment

The report had therefore sought approval to procure a new waste collection vehicle fleet. Councillors noted that the service would remain unchanged from the residents' perspective with operational improvements gained from increased reliability and improved efficiency of the new vehicles.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the purchase of a replacement refuse and recycling collection fleet as set out in the report submitted to the Executive, be approved
- (2) That the transfer of £3,400,000 from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme, be approved.

Reason:

The recommendations are made to ensure that Guildford Borough Council can continue to provide statutory waste and recycling collection services that maintain high resident satisfaction and best value for the organisation.

## **EX21 GUILDFORD WEST RAILWAY STATION**

The Executive considered a report on the proposal to establish a new Guildford West Rail Station in the west of the town that would help relieve congestion and parking in the area by providing a genuine alternative to the private motor car. It would encourage modal shift and support the proposed expansion of the area, which included the Royal Surrey County Hospital, University of Surrey and Guildford Research Park, in addition to a large residential population. Other benefits included an interface with, and complementing, Phase 1 of the Council's Sustainable Movement Corridor (SMC), helping to sustain important local institutions and further support their expansion by increasing the catchment area from which the staff and students attending and resourcing these institutions were drawn. This station would also enable increased economic development without the associated traffic congestion and high demand for parking and would also improve productivity and support inward investment helping to retain key employers in the area.

The viability of a new railway station on the national network, its size, location, accessibility, impact on existing services and initial views on constructability, had been investigated under Stage 2 (Feasibility) of Network Rail's Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) Process. GRIP was an eight-stage process that sees the concept of a major investment project – in this case a new two-platform railway station - from feasibility, option identification, option selection and subsequent single option development through to detailed design, construction and commissioning of a completed station.

While the GRIP process helped to eliminate non-viable options and provided costs for preferred option construction and commissioning, it did not identify how a project would be funded. Those invested in the process would undertake this in parallel.

In this case, as the Council had identified the requirement for a new station based on many factors including the envisaged local benefits it would deliver, it was the Council's responsibility to source funding by exploring potential contributions from developers and other stakeholders such as Network Rail, the University of Surrey, Surrey County Council, the EM3 LEP, etc. The extent of funding required would become clearer as the project moved through the necessary GRIP stages.

The next stage (GRIP 3 – Option Selection) would allow the Council to review the options put forward in the GRIP 2 Feasibility Report in more detail. It would identify any unforeseen issues e.g. topography, bearing capacity etc. that could eliminate a GRIP 2 option from moving forward.

An allocation had been identified in the Local Plan for the proposed new station - it was one of the two options put forward under GRIP 2 for consideration. It was anticipated that the work undertaken under GRIP 3 would confirm its viability and identification as the preferred location, but this could not be assumed at the current time until the full option appraisal had been completed.

There would be some land requirements for the options to be considered in GRIP 3 and this might influence the final option selection. Discussions had already been initiated with Network Rail, Great Western Railway (GWR), South Western Railway (SWR) Royal Surrey County Hospital and University of Surrey in this respect.

Matters such as station design, access, and the necessary amount, type and location of car parking required to support a new station here would be considered in more detail at the appropriate time under GRIP Stages 3 and 4.

The report to the Executive had provided a project progress update and had sought approval to move the project forward to GRIP Stage 3 (Option Selection), and to transfer funds from the provisional to the approved capital programme in order to initiate the next stages of the project (GRIP 4 (Single Option Development) onwards).

In considering this matter, Mr Bill Stokoe (chairman of Guildford Vision Group) commented on the impact of the proposal on the town centre in terms of how, quantitatively, the provision of the new railway station would reduce the need for trips and journeys in the town centre by road.

In response, officers referred to the background papers on the outline business case and feasibility study which had been published with the report and, in particular, the details around trip movements and benefits to the wider town.

During the debate, the following points were made:

- Whilst there had been a delay in proceeding from GRIP 2 to GRIP 3, officers were confident that the project could be delivered by the end of 2024 or early 2025.
- The cost of the project of between £15 million to £20 million was a best estimate at this stage.
- Officers had liaised with the EM3 LEP in terms of keeping them up to date with progress with the project, and they would be approached formally in terms of a contribution, once the project costs had been established.

Having considered the report, the Executive

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the findings of the previously-completed GRIP 2 (Feasibility) study be endorsed.
- (2) That progression of the project to GRIP 3 (Option Selection) be approved.

(3) That the Director of Planning and Regeneration be authorised:

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(a) to take all necessary steps in accordance with the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules to procure services and enter into a contract with the preferred supplier, in order to deliver GRIP 3; and

(b) to establish a new Project Board

(4) That the transfer of £500,000 from the provisional capital budget of £5.2 million for this project to the approved programme, ready to commence works on GRIP 4 once the GRIP 3 work has been formally signed-off, be approved.

Reason:

To progress works necessary for the future delivery of the Guildford West Rail Station at Park Barn.

The meeting finished at 8.04 pm

Signed .....

Date

Chairman

# EXECUTIVE

27 August 2019

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

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

\*Present

Councillors Diana Jones, Ted Mayne, and Ramsey Nagaty were also in attendance.

## **EX22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Joss Bigmore, Angela Goodwin, and David Goodwin.

## **EX23 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

Councillor Fiona White declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Minute EX26 – Watts Gallery – Physical Energy Sculpture, as she was a county councillor representative on the Limnerslease Management Committee.

## **EX24 MINUTES**

The Executive approved, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2019. The Chairman signed the minutes.

## **EX25 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader announced the resignation of Councillor Susan Parker from the Executive today in light of questions over conduct, in respect of which a confidential review was currently being undertaken.

## **EX26 WATTS GALLERY - PHYSICAL ENERGY SCULPTURE**

The Executive noted that in order to celebrate the bi-centennial year of G F Watts, the Watts Gallery Trust had launched a fundraising campaign to commission a new bronze cast of his famous sculpture, *Physical Energy*. The sculpture would be located next to the A3 in Compton and would be a major piece of public art enhancing Guildford's cultural and heritage offer to visitors and providing benefits to the local economy.

The Executive, having considered a report which sought approval to make a financial contribution towards the cost of completing the project

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a grant of £40,000 to the Watts Gallery Trust towards the cost of installing *Physical Energy* alongside the A3 in Compton be approved.

- (2) That a revenue supplementary estimate of £40,000 to fund the grant in 2019-20 be approved and financed through the New Homes Bonus Reserve.

Reason:

To facilitate the installation of an iconic and inspirational piece of public art that celebrates the cultural heritage of Guildford and its association with the nationally important artist, G F Watts.

## **EX27 FOOD POVERTY - REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Executive considered a report on Food Poverty which had been submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S), following an in-depth review by a task and finish group. In a wide-ranging analysis, the Food Poverty report had suggested that the scale of food poverty and insecurity within the Borough had not been recognised sufficiently. Furthermore, the report had cautioned against mistaking short-term action as a solution and had highlighted the need to act against the structural causes of food poverty and insecurity.

While emphasising that food aid was not a solution to food poverty and insecurity, O&S had recommended ways to improve the immediate, local response for those in food poverty while longer-term solutions were pursued.

Having noted that full Council had also considered O&S's Food Poverty report on 31 July 2019, the Executive acknowledged that, as the decision-maker, it was required to respond formally to the report's recommendations and indicate agreement or otherwise.

Having considered the report, the Executive

**RESOLVED:** That in responding formally to the findings within the Food Poverty report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Executive endorses the Committee's recommendations as follows:

- (1) The Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions outlining the problems caused by Universal Credit and other welfare reforms and calling for immediate upstream action on food insecurity.
- (2) The Executive formally recognise food poverty and insecurity as issues meriting priority action in the Borough.
- (3) The Executive reiterate its support for the principle that pay should reflect living costs and that the Council becomes an accredited real Living Wage employer with the Living Wage Foundation then promote the Living Wage scheme to employers locally.
- (4) The Executive develop and implement a Food Poverty Strategy and Action Plan that includes, but is not limited to:
  - (a) Facilitation of a food insecurity forum for the Borough (invited stakeholders to include food aid providers, food bank referrers, the Citizens Advice, churches, schools, sheltered housing, supported accommodation providers, and other experts by experience).
  - (b) Development and training sessions on food poverty and insecurity for Councillors, led by the relevant Lead Councillor, that includes advice on dealing with residents in severe hardship, how to make food bank referrals, the roll out of Universal Credit, and the local social security safety net.
  - (c) Prioritisation of a community space, 'Lighthouse' style resource for the Borough.

- (d) Preparation and delivery of a formal food access plan to identify barriers to accessing affordable and nutritious food and actions to address them.
  - (e) Measures to encourage the creation of a community store or social supermarket (such as a *Your Local Pantry*).
  - (f) Development of local measurements of food poverty and insecurity, including engaging with external experts whenever possible, and working with partnership organisations such as Guildford's Health and Wellbeing Board.
  - (g) Extension of the remit of the Mayor's Local Distress Fund and reviewing the application procedure.
  - (h) Increased promotion of existing initiatives that target food poverty and insecurity and provide help to residents in hardship (including, Surrey's Local Assistance Scheme, the Discretionary Housing Payments fund, Guildford's Local Council Tax Support Hardship fund, the Mayor's Local Distress Fund, and emergency food aid providers).
  - (i) Maintaining and publicising, including on the Council's website and through partners, the current provision of food aid that is accessible to Guildford Borough residents.
  - (j) Review of the application process and criteria for the Council's Local Council Tax Support Hardship fund.
- (5) The Executive ensure the Overview and Scrutiny review of food poverty is publicised.
- (6) The Executive request local emergency food aid providers consider the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny review of food poverty and insecurity (for example, the consideration of self-referral gateways and removal of the three-visit cap; altering food voucher forms by adding a tick box to specify Universal Credit as the primary cause of the referral; a possible name change to exclude the term 'food bank'; a limited delivery service; further staggering of opening times; improved availability of food parcels in more places around the community; ensuring there are no faith-based obligations, questions, or interventions with food aid users at any stage of a visit; and endorsement of the Dignity Principles).
- (7) That the Executive submit to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee an update on the above recommendations no later than November 2019.

Reason:

To ensure the Executive respond formally to Overview and Scrutiny's recommendations for addressing food poverty and insecurity in the Borough.

**EX28 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 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.

## EX29 ACQUISITION OF AN INDUSTRIAL HOLDING ON SLYFIELD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

The Executive was reminded that a report on this matter had been considered by full Council as an item of urgent business on 31 July 2019 in order to secure a supplementary capital estimate of up to £5m for the purpose of enabling the Council to submit a bid for the acquisition of an industrial holding on Slyfield Industrial Estate.

Councillors noted that, given the tight time scales imposed by the vendor, the Managing Director had exercised his delegated power to act in relation to matters of urgency by making a key executive decision, in consultation with both the Leader of the Council and the Monitoring Officer. That decision involved transfer of monies from the provisional to the approved capital programme, the submission of a bid and authorising the Corporate Property Manager to take all necessary steps to complete the purchase.

Whenever the Managing Director took a delegated executive decision under the urgency provisions within the scheme of delegation to officers, details of the use of that power had to be reported to the next meeting of the Executive.

The Executive, having received a report on the matter, which also provided an update on the position regarding the bid

### RESOLVED:

- (1) That the action taken on 1 August 2019 by the Managing Director under delegated powers, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be noted.
- (2) That the Corporate Property Manager be authorised to make a further bid at a later date on the same terms as agreed by the Managing Director on 1 August 2019, should the opportunity arise

### Reason:

To satisfy the requirements of paragraph 2 of the list of delegated powers to the Managing Director/Head of Paid Service in Part 3 of the Constitution.

**Note:** By reason of the special circumstances described below, the chairman considered that this item should be dealt with at this meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**Special Circumstances:** Where a delegated executive decision has been taken under the urgency provisions of paragraph 2 of the list of delegated powers to the Managing Director/Head of Paid Service in Part 3 of the Constitution, a report must be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive regarding use of this power.

The meeting finished at 7.21 pm

Signed .....

Chairman

Date .....