

EXECUTIVE

TUESDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER, 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION SHEET

Agenda No Item

12. **Supplementary Information Sheet (Pages 1 - 6)**

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EXECUTIVE

23 NOVEMBER 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Procedure for the discharge of business at this meeting

The Leader of the Council welcomes the attendance of members of the public and non-Executive councillors at this meeting.

The procedure for dealing with each item of business shall be as follows:

1. Lead Councillor to introduce report on the matter
2. Non-Executive councillors invited to ask a question or comment, for which they will have a maximum of **five** minutes each
3. Lead councillor to respond to comments and questions
4. Executive debates the matter
5. Executive to make decision on the matter

AGENDA ITEM 5: LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022-23 (Pages 11 - 50)

Lead Councillor: Cllr Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council (on behalf of the Lead Councillor for Resources)

Lead Officer: Belinda Hayden, Revenue and Benefits Lead

AGENDA ITEM 6: LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES (Pages 51 - 140)

Lead Councillor: Cllr Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council

Lead Officer: Stuart Harrison, Policy Lead, Planning Policy

AGENDA ITEM 7: REVIEW OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (Pages 141 - 150)

Lead Councillor: Cllr Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council

Lead Officer: Stuart Harrison, Policy Lead, Planning Policy

To note the correction of the date on page 136 of the agenda. Paragraph 3.3 (Background) should read:

- “3.3 The Council adopted the previous LDS on 24 March 2020 prior to the Regulation 18 consultation on Part 2 of the Local Plan - the Local Plan: development management policies. Significant member engagement through the cross-party Local Plan Panel together with some delays to key parts of the evidence base has resulted in a delay to the envisaged timetable (from March/April 2021 to January/February **2022**) which therefore needs to be updated prior to the commencement of the Regulation 19 consultation. A further reason for the delay is that the Regulation 18 consultation was delayed by a couple of months due to COVID and the need to adopt an updated Statement of Community Involvement prior to consultation. The milestones following the Regulation 18 consultation were not amended in the previous LDS to take account of this delay”.

AGENDA ITEM 8: FINANCIAL MONITORING 2021-22 (Pages 151 - 210)

Lead Councillor: Cllr Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council (on behalf of the Lead Councillor for Resources)

Lead Officer: Claire Morris, Director of Resources

At its meeting held on 18 November 2021, the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee considered the Financial Monitoring Report, and made the following comments which the Executive is asked to note:

1. Acknowledgement of the severe state of the Council's finances, the dangerously low levels of reserves and the need for tight financial management to ensure that the position does not worsen, but also to begin a process for re-building reserves.
2. It was noted that the in-year savings plan to mitigate the current overspend, which would be presented to the Executive at its meeting on 23 November 2021, would only mitigate the impact in the current financial year and could not be replicated in future years.
3. Appreciation of the improvements in the monitoring and reporting of the impact of slippage in progress with major capital projects to ensure greater awareness of the potential risk of funding having to be returned.
4. In response to a request for additional information in the main report on S.106 developer contributions, the Committee was reminded that a more detailed and regular monitoring report on S.106 contributions would be submitted to the next meeting and every six months thereafter
5. Suggestion that the Council invests in electric car charging points and the need to explore alternative payment methods for parking in order to maximise income. It was noted that there was a project in the pipeline to replace "pay on foot" equipment in the Council's car parks
6. In response to concerns over the level of investments in other local authorities and associated returns, and the extent to which those investments were secure given the significant financial difficulties that all local authorities were experiencing, officers confirmed that the returns were higher than could be achieved by way of investment in banks. It was also noted that no local authority had defaulted on any loan.

AGENDA ITEM 9: GENERAL FUND DRAFT BUDGET 2022-23 AND MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 2022-23 TO 2025-26 (Pages 211 - 238)

Lead Councillor: Cllr Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council (on behalf of the Lead Councillor for Resources)

Lead Officer: Claire Morris, Director of Resources

At its meeting held on 11 November 2021, the Joint Executive Advisory Board considered this matter. The following points arose from related questions, comments, and discussion:

1. The Resources Director was familiar with the draft budget of Waverley Borough Council (WBC) and regularly liaised with her equivalent colleague at that Council. The main differences between the budgets of this Council and WBC were that the latter outsourced many of its services, resulting in high non-staff contract costs, whilst Guildford provided more in-house services, leading to greater direct employee salary

costs. Guildford also provided more community and cultural services and its budget reflected this. A specific budgeting difference between the Councils was that Guildford did not show the percentage of Benefit Subsidies received from the Government to fund benefits paid to claimants as this was passported to claimants and not retained by the Council. However, the Council did receive a benefit administration grant of approximately £230,000 from the Government.

2. Although the pre-planning application advice service had been suspended owing to staffing pressures resulting from a significant increase in the number of householder planning applications received, the Planning Team had now been strengthened and consideration was being given to resuming the service as it provided an income stream and led to an improvement in the quality of applications submitted. In common with other district and borough councils across the country, Guildford found that the planning service did not cover its costs and needed to be subsidised by other services. Lobbying on a national scale was taking place with a view to securing reform to allow councils greater freedom and flexibility to raise fees to recoup costs.
3. The pay claim received by the Council from Unison requesting a 10% increase in pay over a 3 year period to address the pay restraint in the public sector over the last decade was supported to overcome recruitment issues, particularly in the light of the Future Guildford programme.
4. With regard to G Live and the Spectrum, both venues had re-opened fully in line with the Government's Covid-19 roadmap. The contract in respect of G Live had been extended for a further three years and a reduction of approximately £300,000 in the management fee paid by the Council had been negotiated. At the expiry of the contract in 2024, when the market was expected to have recovered, a full tendering process would be pursued with a view to improving the Council's financial return. The Spectrum contract, which expired this year, had been extended for two years to October 2023 resulting in a reduction in the Council's management fee income in the region of £260,000. A range of future delivery models, including a possible joint procurement with WBC or the establishment of a Guildford leisure management trust, were being considered by a project team.
5. As part of the operational assets review, one strand of the Savings Strategy, consideration was being given to utilising office space at the Millmead complex freed by home working to generate income whilst the medium to long term picture was deliberated. Contracts had recently been signed in respect of the lease of office space in Old Millmead House and the kitchen area in New Millmead House had been leased to a charitable community organisation, FoodWise.
6. The Government's general Covid-19 grant did not fund all of the Council's pandemic related costs, which occurred in the areas of sales, fees and charges in relation to Leisure Services in particular. The Council had been expected to cover the first 5% of any loss against its budget and also 25% of any lost income over that 5%, the remainder of which was compensated by the Government. However, the Government had also allocated other more specific grants which related to homelessness, isolating, vulnerable people and food parcels in addition to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund towards restrictions in the area.
7. Further to the Strategy and Resources EAB's conclusion at its meeting held on 11 October 2021 that it had not been presented with sufficient information to endorse the recommended Option in the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) savings mandate, the Executive had been provided with additional benchmarking information which would be circulated to the Joint EAB. This information, which included the number of paid staff, the amount of clients and the total expenditure, had been obtained from the published statement of accounts for each of the CABs. The benchmarking indicated that the expenditure per client by Ash and Guildford CABs was greater than comparable CABs across Surrey and that this Council provided a higher level of funding than most other local authorities in the County, particularly as there were two CABs in the Borough. However, it was for CABs to decide how they wished to present information and

different reporting methods could lead to anomalies in client numbers. All representations would be taken into account.

8. In terms of realising the savings to be generated from collaboration with WBC, the Joint Chief Executive had been appointed leading to a cost reduction. Business cases would be developed in respect of future stages of collaboration to balance the savings against costs of transformation. The following stage was expected to be the appointment of a joint senior management team which would require structure and staffing consultations and it was anticipated that related savings could be achieved from 2022-23.
9. Although the last multi-year settlement from the Government had proposed a negative Revenue Support Grant, this had been delayed on several occasions and could be subsumed into the Fair Funding Review or an alternative national local government funding review, involving Business Rates retention, as proposed prior to Brexit and Covid-19. However, the Government was currently focusing on its 'Levelling Up' agenda following the introduction of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and was likely to seek some form of resource reallocation across the country. The Local Government Finance Settlement would confirm the Government's intentions in this regard.
10. The introduction of a town council covering the unparished Guildford urban area was suggested as a means to raise revenue to fund the Cultural and Heritage services and other service provision focused on the town centre, which was currently funded by the Borough Council to the possible detriment of residents living in outlying parts of the town and Borough. The suggestion was supported by councillors who felt that the matter should be explored to determine the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a Guildford town council. In response, the Leader of the Council requested that the Joint EAB clearly specify the scope of the review it was recommending given the need for efficiencies and the effective use of officers' time.
11. The Joint EAB was advised that parish and town councils were not currently subject to a 2% Council Tax cap as was the case with district and borough councils. However, the Government reserved the right to cap excessive increases in precept at parish and town level. It would not be appropriate to create a town council and allocate it additional Council Tax raising powers over its local borough council and in the event that a town council was created, the borough council would transfer the relevant services and budget to the town council and reduce its own Council Tax accordingly. Therefore Council Tax adjustments would need to be made in such circumstances. In the event of district / borough councils becoming unitary authorities, a Council Tax rationalisation would also be required.
12. The Community Services mandate was due to be considered by the Service Delivery EAB on 13 January 2022. Although Community Services was a theme in the Savings Strategy, it would not be included in the draft budget until it had been considered by the EAB and further work had been undertaken.
13. An updated version of the proposed Park and Ride savings mandate would be submitted to a future EAB meeting for further consideration. A working group was currently considering the Park and Ride service, which was a county function operated by this Council on behalf of Surrey County Council. The proposed saving was likely to consist of closing one of the Park and Ride sites or generating additional income. It was suggested that the Council could utilise land in its ownership to offer a service at a reduced cost following the closure of one of the existing sites.
14. The ICT costs in the draft budget related to this Council and its systems only and any additional costs, or savings, associated with the WBC collaboration were yet to be determined.
15. Although it was suggested that the car parks maintenance reserve could be reduced to achieve a saving, the Joint EAB was advised that the car parks inspection routine and maintenance fund reflected the importance of related health and safety requirements.
16. With regard to the impact of Covid-19 on local tourism, the amount of income lost by the Council in relation to charging the Tourist Information Centre for bookings and box

office could be quantified. During the previous year the Council had allocated £43million in Business Rate Relief from the Government to local businesses and during the current year this amount had reduced to 50% relief. Interested councillors were advised to contact the Lead Councillor for Economy for an update in respect of initiatives being pursued by shops and businesses to boost the local economy.

17. Further information in relation to the operational assets review, particularly in relation to the Lockwood Centre at Slyfield, was sought in response to requests from local organisations, mainly charities, for accommodation from which to deliver services to residents. Councillors were advised that the review was currently focusing on the Millmead mandate and that other property assets would be reviewed in due course. In this connection, it was suggested that, in the event of the need to reduce grants to organisations in receipt of financial support from the Council, spare office accommodation at Millmead could possibly be offered to such organisations free of charge in lieu of funding. However, this scenario would need to be balanced against the Council's need to maximise its income.
18. The pie charts contained in the presentation were considered to be useful and it was requested that they be published on the Council's website for residents' information once the budget had been set.

The Resources Director and her team were thanked for their work involved with the preparation of the draft budget, which had been clearly presented, and the Joint EAB expressed its gratitude to the Director and Lead Councillors for the full and informed responses to their questions.

AGENDA ITEM 10: PARISH COUNCILS - CONCURRENT FUNCTIONS GRANT AID APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE 2022-23 (Pages 239 - 252)

Lead Councillor: Cllr Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council (on behalf of the Lead Councillor for Resources)

Lead Officer: Claire Morris, Director of Resources

Correction:

Paragraph (ii) (pages 233-234 of the agenda) should read:

“(ii) That consideration of future years' budget for Concurrent Functions Grant Aid, from 2023-24, be referred to an EAB for further discussion, following the Director of Resources' recommendation to reduce it to £60,000 p.a.”

AGENDA ITEM 11: SELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE DEPUTY MAYOR 2022-23 (Pages 253 - 256)

Lead Councillor: Cllr Joss Bigmore, Leader of the Council

Lead Officer: John Armstrong, Democratic Services and Elections Manager

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