

EXECUTIVE

- * Councillor Joss Bigmore (Chairman)
- * Councillor Caroline Reeves (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Tim Anderson | * Councillor John Redpath |
| * Councillor Jan Harwood | * Councillor John Rigg |
| * Councillor Julia McShane | * Councillor James Steel |

*Present

Councillors Angela Gunning, Ramsey Nagaty, Paul Spooner and Catherine Young were also in attendance.

EX44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

EX45 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EX46 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

EX47 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader informed the meeting that the Mayor, Councillor Richard Billington had left hospital on Monday, that his operation had gone well and that he was now at home where he would continue his recovery from what had been serious surgery. The Mayor and Mayoress were very grateful for all the messages of support they had received.

The Leader commented that the issue of child hunger during school holidays had rightly dominated the news over the past few days. He noted that in Guildford Borough there would be children who, without support, could go without meals that would be normally provided at schools.

However, the Leader observed that we were fortunate in Guildford because the community had stood up along with local businesses to work with this Council to combat food poverty. The Council had continued to provide food parcels to the most vulnerable even after Central Government funding for this ceased during the summer. The Council would extend this support by coordination with its community services team to ensure that families with children at home continued to receive the support they needed. The Council's efforts had been complimented by its partnership with voluntary organisations, the private sector, and the schools themselves. The Leader thanked everyone that had offered help, including the University, Kings School, Foodwise, Stoke Community Support, The Ash, Ash Vale and Ash Green Coronavirus Support Group as well as Mandira's Kitchen donating 250 meals, Pho Restaurant and Love Brownies in Tunsgate offering packed lunches and the Bench Bar at the Sports Park providing hot meals, together with many others. The Leader was investigating setting up a Civic accreditation such that those that had given selflessly throughout the crisis were recognised officially.

The Leader observed there had been much talk about the amount of financial support that came from Westminster including the tranche of £100,000 that had been announced in the previous week. In consideration, the Leader set out the Council's latest estimates for the impact of COVID to its finances and the support it had received.

For the full year it was estimated that the pandemic would have caused £4.5 million in extra expenditure. Principally, this covered looking after the homeless, the cost of providing personal protective equipment (PPE) and subsidising the Council's leisure facilities. The Leader estimated lower incomes of £8.2 million which in the most part was loss of parking income, but also represented reduced income from sports and community facilities. The total impact to the Council's budget was £12.7 million. So far, the Council had received a total of £1.9 million from Central Government, leaving a shortfall of £10.8 million. The Leader explained the Council might expect to receive a further £5 million through the Sales, Fees and Charges scheme whereby the Council was compensated for around 70% of some of its revenues; however, the claims submitted were still being assessed. The best possible scenario for the Council was to have to fund £5.8 million from reserves.

The Leader noted the forecast a gap of nearly £3 million in the Council's budget for next year which would mean further inroads into increasingly scarce reserves, cuts to some of the services or projects to deliver higher revenues. The Council would be starting the formal budget process shortly, which would involve consultation with residents in order to properly inform us as to what the community thinks are priorities, which was important when making difficult decisions about the Council's future service provision.

EX48 TENANCY STRATEGY

The Executive considered a report setting out the requirement for the Council to have a tenancy strategy and appended a revised strategy for adoption. Under the Localism Act 2011 (s.150), the Council had a duty to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy, which should be periodically reviewed. The Council had published a tenancy strategy in 2013 that now required review. The revised strategy had set out how the Council would determine the type and length of tenancies to be offered to social tenants in the Borough. There was a high demand for social housing across the Borough and the Council was the biggest landlord. It was noted that the highest levels of family deprivation in Surrey were to be found in parts of Guildford. Other social landlords (Registered Providers or housing associations) that operated in Guildford would have regard to the Strategy.

The Lead Councillor for Housing and Development Control introduced the report and noted that the landscape of social housing was changing and that it would be necessary to review the Tenancy Strategy more regularly to ensure it was up to date with policy and best practice.

The report included comments from the Community Executive Advisory Board (EAB) arising from the meeting held on 10 September 2020. The Vice Chairman of the EAB endorsed the comments at the meeting.

Having considered the report and the comments of the EAB, the Executive

RESOLVED: That the revised Tenancy Strategy be adopted

Reasons:

1. There is a legal requirement under the Localism Act 2011 for the Council to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy and to review that strategy periodically, which this report addresses. In line with this statutory requirement, all of the social landlords operating in Guildford must consider the Council's over-arching strategy, as set out in the appendices to this report, which has been circulated as a consultation document to each social landlord operating in the Borough, as well as being available online for all stakeholders.

- 2. Flexible and other tenancies assist as tools in the efficient management of social housing stock in Guildford, which is valued by the Council’s social landlord services’ function and other social landlords operating in the borough.

EX49 INTRODUCING CHARGES FOR RAT AND MICE TREATMENTS

The Executive considered a report that set out the existing service provision for rodent (mice and rat) pest control treatments provided by the Council. The report proposed a number of options for introducing a charge for the delivery of rodent control treatments which would enable the Executive to make a decision about future service provision.

The Lead Councillor for Environment introduced the report and spoke in support of Option 2. It was noted that the Council provided a high standard of service to residents, but that it was also essential in the current financial climate to consider where savings could be made. It was recommended that a charge should be introduced for rat and mice control treatments but that there should be no charge for those residents in receipt of qualifying benefits. The charge would provide £135,000 saving to the Housing Revenue Account.

Consideration of the report by the Community Executive Advisory Board on 10 September had resulted in an update of the list of qualifying benefits. The EAB’s comments and recommendations were set out the report. The Vice Chairman of the EAB attended the Executive meeting and explained that discussion of this topic had raised a number of concerns including the implications of a possible change to the structure of local authorities in the County. Ultimately, the EAB had been most concerned about the implications of the non-reporting of infestations should a charge be levied across the board. The Vice-Chairman, whilst happy to support Option 2, reiterated the EAB’s preferred option of continuing the contract for a further 12 months, or Option 1.

Having considered the report and the EAB’s comments and recommendations, the Executive

RESOLVED: That Option 2: To continue to offer a contracted-out Pest Control treatment service but introduce charges for rodent treatments with a 100% concession for users in receipt of qualifying benefits, be adopted.

Reason:

In order to ensure the Council had fully considered recommendations for introducing charges for rats and mice treatments for residents.

The meeting finished at 7.37 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman