

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Guildford Borough Council held at Lecture Theatre No. 03MS01 at the University of Surrey - Rik Medlik Building (Block MS), Stag Hill Campus, Guildford on Tuesday 6 July 2021

* The Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley (Mayor)

* The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Dennis Booth (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor Paul Abbey	* Councillor Ted Mayne
* Councillor Tim Anderson	* Councillor Julia McShane
* Councillor Jon Askew	* Councillor Ann McShee
* Councillor Christopher Barrass	* Councillor Bob McShee
* Councillor Joss Bigmore	* Councillor Masuk Miah
* Councillor David Bilbé	* Councillor Ramsey Nagaty
* Councillor Richard Billington	Councillor Susan Parker
* Councillor Chris Blow	* Councillor George Potter
* Councillor Ruth Brothwell	* Councillor Jo Randall
* Councillor Colin Cross	* Councillor John Redpath
* Councillor Guida Esteves	Councillor Maddy Redpath
* Councillor Graham Eyre	* Councillor John Rigg
* Councillor Andrew Gomm	* Councillor Tony Rooth
* Councillor Angela Goodwin	* Councillor Will Salmon
Councillor David Goodwin	* Councillor Deborah Seabrook
* Councillor Angela Gunning	* Councillor Pauline Searle
* Councillor Gillian Harwood	* Councillor Paul Spooner
* Councillor Jan Harwood	Councillor James Steel
Councillor Liz Hogger	* Councillor Cait Taylor
* Councillor Tom Hunt	* Councillor James Walsh
* Councillor Diana Jones	* Councillor Fiona White
Councillor Steven Lee	* Councillor Keith Witham
* Councillor Nigel Manning	Councillor Catherine Young

*Present

CO19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Paul Abbey, David Goodwin, Liz Hogger, Steven Lee, Susan Parker, Maddy Redpath, James Steel, and Catherine Young.

CO20 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO21 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor noted that it was good to see that Guildford was beginning to “open up” as we learnt to live with Covid. Since the last Full Council meeting, The Mayor had been kept busy with a number of engagements, including having the pleasure of opening the Hope Garden at St. Mary’s Church, the new Lidl’s Supermarket at Ladymead and Montezuma’s Chocolate Shop in the High Street. She had also met up with some fantastic volunteers at the Waterside Centre and Abbot’s Hospital.

The Mayor had also enjoyed some ‘live’ entertainment provided by the Guildford Shakespeare Company’s first outside production for over a year, and the Guildford Chamber Choir’s “delayed” 40th anniversary concert. The Mayor was particularly pleased that the Guildford

Fringe Festival had returned this year, and would be running until 25 July with a huge variety of events, some of which were free.

On 3 July 2021, a bucket collection at Tesco, Ashenden Road in aid of the Mayor's chosen charity, Shooting Star Children's Hospices, had raised £562.68. The Mayor thanked friends, volunteers from the charity, and fellow councillors Ann McShee, Chris Blow, Gillian Harwood and Masuk Miah, for giving up their time to support this very worthy charity and the families it supported.

The Mayor reminded councillors that, due to the England v Denmark Euro 2020 semi-final, the start time of tomorrow evening's briefing for councillors on the warding patterns being proposed by the electoral review working group had been brought forward from 7pm to 6.15pm.

Finally, the Mayor thanked the University of Surrey, and especially their events team, for their help in kindly agreeing to host this meeting.

CO22 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader reported that 11 July 2021 was the official day of remembrance marking the 26th anniversary of the genocide of muslim men and boys in Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Leader commented that, on 19 July 2021, it was very likely that there would be a significant reduction in the restrictions under which we were current living due to the pandemic, at the same time as the number of infections was increasing both locally and nationally. However, due to the vaccination programme, hospital admissions had thankfully not increased, and cases generally had predominantly affected younger people. The Council was working with Healthcare partners and Surrey County Council to target areas of vaccine hesitancy to encourage more people to be vaccinated.

The Leader noted that this week, the Council was asking residents to submit names of loved ones who had died in military service since the end of World War II, which would be added to the War Memorial in the Castle Grounds.

The Leader reported that the Charlotteville Cycling Club would be holding their Annual Town Centre Cycle Race on the evening of 7 July.

CO23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No questions or requests to speak had been received from the public.

CO24 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

No questions had been received from councillors.

CO25 OPTIONS FOR COLLABORATION WITH WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Following consideration of opportunities for greater partnership working with Waverley Borough Council by the Joint Executive Advisory Board (EAB) and Executive in February 2021, the Council considered an update report on an initial options appraisal developed by the Local Government Association and Local Partnerships (LGA). The report had sought direction on the next steps for collaboration.

The Council was reminded of the events of 2020 that led to the eleven district councils in Surrey commissioning a report on local government collaboration by KPMG. The KPMG report presented a strong case for councils to work together more closely in the context of continued funding reductions from central government and the financial consequences of the Covid pandemic. It was notable and unsurprising that KPMG identified that Guildford and Waverley

Boroughs could be natural partners, given the geography, infrastructure links and similar sizes. Despite the councils having made efficiencies and cut costs in recent years, both faced extremely difficult financial challenges. In this context, the political leaderships of the two councils, supported by senior officers, held initial discussions in an informal working group about how the two councils might collaborate in the future. The expected outcomes of this work were the retention of two separate democratic councils, but with greater sharing of resources and staffing. It was quickly identified that there were two broad approaches to the transformation needed to sustain services and delivery of financial savings at scale, namely a process by which business cases for shared services could be considered jointly on a Service-by-Service basis; or a single management team to progress the full integration of the officer teams in both councils into one.

The Executives of both councils had agreed that further work was required to assess the two options and the LGA was invited to support this work and to provide independent input. The LGA facilitated two workshops so that the two Executives could meet together and articulate a 'vision statement' reflecting their preferred ambitions, copy of which was attached to the report submitted to the Council.

The LGA, through its consultancy arm, Local Partnerships, had also been asked for a high-level financial appraisal, a copy of which was also attached to the report. The appraisal had recommended that a shared officer structure would provide the most potential for savings.

As some of the potential ways forward could have implications for the employment status of some employees, South East Employers had been engaged to provide human resources advice to the two Executives, with the support of both councils' senior HR professionals. A copy of that advice (which contained exempt information) had also been attached to the report.

In considering a way forward for future collaboration with Waverley Borough Council, the following options had been discussed at a meeting of the Joint Executive Advisory Board (JEAB) on 24 June by way of a mandate, and separately with each political group:

- Option A: Do nothing further
- Option B: Commission further research with a defined scope
- Option C: Shared services
- Option D: Shared headquarters
- Option E: Single management team
- Option F: Single staffing team

A summary of the points raised by the JEAB was included in the report. The matter had also been considered formally by the Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Executive earlier in the day. The Leader's recommendations had been included on the Order Paper for this meeting, together with further details of the potential financial and HR implications of appointing a single joint Chief Executive (acting as Head of Paid Service for both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils).

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, proposed, and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Jan Harwood seconded, a motion in accordance with the Leader's recommendations.

During the debate some councillors expressed concern that there was insufficient information provided on which to make a decision, other than to commission further research (Option B above).

It was also necessary for the Council, upon the motion of the Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Dennis Booth, to

RESOLVE: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Appendix 3 to the report submitted to the Council and the additional HR information circulated with the Order Paper on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Act.

Following consideration of the exempt information, the meeting resumed in public.

Having considered the matter, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Full Council agrees to pursue the option of creating a single management team with Waverley Borough Council, comprised of statutory officers (Head of Paid Service; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer), directors and heads of service as the most appropriate means for bringing forward business cases for future collaboration.
- (2) That Full Council authorises the Council's Lead Specialist - HR to take the necessary action, in consultation with Waverley Borough Council and with the support and advice from South East Employers and as set out within the addendum to Appendix 3 of the report, to begin making arrangements for a recruitment and selection of a single joint Chief Executive (acting as Head of Paid Service for both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils) in accordance with the table showing the anticipated stages in the process and approximate timelines referred to in the "Not for Publication" Appendix to the Order Paper circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.
- (3) That a report be submitted to the Council at its next meeting on 28 July 2021 on the following matters:
 - (a) heads of terms for the proposed inter-authority agreement to establish governance arrangements for joint working;
 - (b) the proposed job description and terms and conditions in respect of the appointment of a Joint Chief Executive; and
 - (c) the establishment of a joint appointments committee, including its composition and terms of reference.

Reason:

To seek direction on the next steps for collaboration with Waverley Borough Council.

CO26 TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Councillors noted that, under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Council was required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) detailing the governance framework and procedures that had operated at the Council during the year, a review of their effectiveness, significant governance issues that had occurred and a statement of assurance.

The 2015 Regulations also required the Council to publish the AGS alongside the adopted statement of accounts each year.

In recent years, the Executive had approved the AGS on the recommendation of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee. Officers were now of the view that approval of the AGS was probably a non-Executive function and should be carried out either by the full Council or, in

common with many councils which had delegated the function to an audit (or equivalent) committee, by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.

The Council was also required by the 2015 Regulations to ensure that it had a sound system of internal control which:

- (a) facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- (b) ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- (c) includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council must review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control for each financial year and at the same time prepare the AGS. The AGS was the mechanism by which this review was undertaken.

It was clear that the relevant item in the existing terms of reference of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee required an update to actually refer to the AGS. The terms of reference currently stated under Corporate Governance Activity:

“(14) To consider the Council’s statement on internal control and to recommend its adoption.”

Upon the motion of the Chairman of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, Councillor George Potter, seconded by the Vice-Chairman of that Committee, Councillor Deborah Seabrook, the Council

RESOLVED: That the following paragraph be substituted in place of the existing paragraph (14) of the terms of reference of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee (under Corporate Governance Activity):

“(14) To consider and approve the Council’s Annual Governance Statement in advance of the formal approval of the Council’s Statement of Accounts”.

Reason:

To ensure the efficient and effective consideration and approval of the Council’s Annual Governance Statement each year.

CO27 COMMON SEAL

The Council

RESOLVED: That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any documents to give effect to any decisions taken by the Council at this meeting.

The meeting finished at 8.16 pm

Signed
Mayor

Date