

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

Thursday, 25th January, 2024

The decisions summarised below were taken by the Executive at the above-mentioned meeting and, subject to the call-in procedure referred to in Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 and to Note (a) at the end of this document, shall have effect five working days after the day of the meeting. Details of any recommendations to Council are also included for completeness.

Members of the Executive

Chairman:

Councillor Julia McShane (Leader of the Council & Lead Councillor for Housing) *

Vice-Chairman:

Councillor Tom Hunt (Deputy Leader of the Council & Lead Councillor for Regeneration) *

Councillor Angela Goodwin, Lead Councillor for Engagement and Customer Services *

Councillor Catherine Houston, Lead Councillor for Commercial Services *

Councillor Richard Lucas, Lead Councillor for Finance and Property *

Councillor Carla Morson, Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development

Councillor George Potter, Lead Councillor for Environment and Climate Change *

Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith, Lead Councillor for Regulatory and Democratic Services *

Councillor Fiona White, Lead Councillor for Planning *

*Present

Councillors Philip Brooker, Vanessa King, Joanne Shaw, Howard Smith, Dominique Williams and Catherine Young were also in remote attendance.

Agenda Item No.		Officer(s) to action Item
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carla Morson.</p>	
2.	<p>LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3.	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held 4th January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record. The Chairman signed the minutes.</p>	
4.	<p>LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Leader made no announcements.</p>	
5.	<p>REVIEW OF THE GUILDFORD BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN: STRATEGY AND SITES (2015-2034)</p> <p><u>Decision:</u></p> <p>Recommended to Full Council, meeting on 21 February 2024:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Guildford Local Plan: strategy and sites (2015-2034) be updated following the findings of the review undertaken in accordance with regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended); and 2. Noted that a further report would be submitted to the Executive at a later date to clarify the appropriate timing for and budgetary requirements of the Local Plan update. This report should follow the national planning reform legislation and consider its implications for the update 	<p>Stuart Harrison</p>

process.

Reason(s):

1. There is a statutory requirement to review the LPSS within 5 years of its adoption. This is to assess whether it needs updating. The review findings set out in this report indicate that an update of the LPSS would be an appropriate course of action to ensure that the Council's Local Plan remains effective into the future.
2. There are a range of uncertainties which impact on the context for the preparation of a new / updated Local Plan, some of which relate to the lack of clarity regarding the detail of proposed Government reforms to the planning system which guide plan-making. It is necessary that these are fully considered in order to set out recommendations regarding the scope and timing of a new plan-making process.

Other options considered and rejected by the Executive:

None.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader or lead councillors and any dispensation granted:

None.

6. CAPITAL AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2024/25 - 2028/29

Decision:

Jo Knight

1. Approved the new bids set out in Appendix 2 for inclusion in the capital programme as indicated, subject to Council approval.
2. Approved removing the Bright Hill scheme on the HRA approved and provisional programmes as previously reported to Councillors; and
3. Recommended (to Full Council meeting on 7 February 2024)

(1) That the General Fund and HRA capital estimates,

as shown in appendices 3 to 12, as amended to include such bids as may be approved by the Executive at its meeting on 25 January 2024, be approved.

- (2) That the Minimum Revenue Provision policy, referred to in section 9 of this report, be approved.
- (3) That the capital and investment strategy, specifically the investment strategy and Prudential Indicators contained within this report and Appendix 1, be approved.
- (4) That the updated flexible use of capital receipts policy, as set out in Appendix 8, be approved.

Reason(s):

To enable Council, at its budget meeting on 7 February 2024, to approve the capital and investment strategy for 2024/25 to 2028/29, and the funding required for the new capital schemes proposed.

Other options considered and rejected by the Executive:

The alternative investment options set out in paragraph 22 of the report.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader or lead councillors and any dispensation granted:

None.

7. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2024-25

Decision:

Jo Knight

To recommend to Council, meeting on 7 February 2024, that:

1. the proposed HRA revenue budget for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That a rent increase of 7.7%, be implemented.
3. That the fees and charges for HRA services for 2024/25, as

set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.

4. That a 5% increase be applied to garage rents which is in line with the wider Council policy on fees and charges.

Reason(s):

To enable the Council to set the rent charges for HRA property and associated fees and charges, along with authorising the necessary expenditure to implement a budget, this is consistent with the objectives outlined in the HRA Business Plan

Other options considered and rejected by the Executive:

None.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader or lead councillors and any dispensation granted:

None.

8. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024-25 TO 2026-27

Decision:

Richard
Bates

To recommend the following to Council (at its Budget Meeting on 7 February 2024):

1. That the General Fund Budget for 2024/25 as summarised in Appendix 1, incorporating the budget variations included at Appendix 2, be approved.
2. That a 2.99% increase in Guildford Council's Band D Council Tax Charge for 2024/25, be approved with resultant increases to the other council tax bands.
3. That the Council's existing Local Council Tax Support Scheme, with uprating as set out in Appendix 6 and the £40,000 discretionary hardship fund that runs alongside it, be continued.
4. That, from 1 April 2025, the Council varies its determination of 26 February 2019 under Section 11B of

the Local Government Finance Act 1992, so that the long-term empty dwelling levy starts after a property has been empty and unfurnished for one year.

5. That, from 1 April 2025, the Council will charge a premium (levy) of 100% on periodically used dwellings as defined by section 11C of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
6. That the schedule of Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix 3 to this report, be approved.
7. That the use of the 2023-24 underspend as set out in paragraph 8.5 of this report, be approved.

Reason(s):

1. The General Fund Budget is a major decision for the Council and setting a balanced budget is a statutory requirement.
2. Scrutiny of these MTFP and Budget proposals demonstrate transparency and good governance.
3. The Council has been well positioned to respond to these challenges and whilst the latest MTFP for the subsequent years ending 2026/27 continues to project future financial pressures, and opportunities, the Council is able to take action to ensure sufficient funding is in place to deliver and maintain services.

Other options considered and rejected by the Executive:

None.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader or lead councillors and any dispensation granted:

None.

9. GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Decision:

Susan Sale

To adopt the policy set out in appendix 1 of the report incorporating the recommended amendments from the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.

Reason(s):

It is right and proper to uphold the principles of transparency to encourage individuals to make any disclosures and raise any concerns where they suspect wrongdoing.

It is important that the Council has a Policy in place to govern such disclosures and that such Policy is kept under regular review.

Other options considered and rejected by the Executive:

None.

Details of any conflict of interest declared by the Leader or lead councillors and any dispensation granted:

None.

NOTES:

- (a) Any decision marked “#” means that the item was deemed by the Chief Executive and agreed by the Executive and Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be a matter of urgency for the reason indicated and, in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 (h), such decision takes effect immediately and is therefore *not* subject to the call-in procedure.
- (b) The call-in procedure is as follows:
 - (i) the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; or
 - (ii) a minimum of five members of the Councilmay require that a decision be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.
- (c) Councillors wishing to exercise their right to call-in a decision taken by the Executive must give notice in writing to the Democratic Services and Elections Manager. The reason for a councillor calling-in a decision shall accompany any such request and must meet one of the following criteria:
 - (a) that there was insufficient, misleading or inaccurate information available to the decision-maker;
 - (b) that all the relevant facts had not been taken into account and/or properly assessed;

- (c) that the decision is contrary to the budget and policy framework and is not covered by urgency provisions; or
- (d) that the decision is not in accordance with the decision-making principles set out in the Constitution.

Such notice should be marked for the attention of John Armstrong who can be contacted by e-mail on john.armstrong@guildford.gov.uk

- (d) On receipt of a call-in request, the Monitoring Officer will decide, in consultation with the chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, whether it is valid and will notify the councillors concerned accordingly.
- (e) In the case of a valid call-in, the decision shall be referred to a special Call-in meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which shall be held within 21 days of the decision on validity referred to in paragraph (d) above.
- (f) A decision marked with an asterisk denotes that the matter is a “Key Decision” which is defined in the Council’s Constitution as an executive decision:
 - (i) which is likely to result in significant expenditure or savings (of at least £200,000) having regard to the budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
 - (ii) which is likely to have a significant impact on two or more wards within the Borough.