

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL



**MIAH
MAYOR**

Contact Officer:

John Armstrong,
Democratic Services and Elections Manager
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21 August 2023

To the Councillors of Guildford Borough Council

You are hereby summoned to attend an extraordinary meeting of the Council for the Borough of Guildford to be held in the **Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB** on **WEDNESDAY, 30 AUGUST 2023** commencing at 7.00 pm.

Tom Horwood
Chief Executive

Millmead House
Millmead
Guildford
Surrey GU2 4BB

www.guildford.gov.uk

WEBCASTING NOTICE

This meeting will be recorded for live and/or subsequent broadcast on the Council's website in accordance with the Council's capacity in performing a task in the public interest and in line with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014. The whole of the meeting will be recorded, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for six months.

If you have any queries regarding webcasting of meetings, please contact Democratic Services.



THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK (2021- 2025)

Our Vision:

A green, thriving town and villages where people have the homes they need, access to quality employment, with strong and safe communities that come together to support those needing help.

Our Mission:

A trusted, efficient, innovative, and transparent Council that listens and responds quickly to the needs of our community.

Our Values:

- We will put the interests of our community first.
- We will listen to the views of residents and be open and accountable in our decision-making.
- We will deliver excellent customer service.
- We will spend money carefully and deliver good value for money services.
- We will put the environment at the heart of our actions and decisions to deliver on our commitment to the climate change emergency.
- We will support the most vulnerable members of our community as we believe that every person matters.
- We will support our local economy.
- We will work constructively with other councils, partners, businesses, and communities to achieve the best outcomes for all.
- We will ensure that our councillors and staff uphold the highest standards of conduct.

Our strategic priorities:

Homes and Jobs

- Revive Guildford town centre to unlock its full potential
- Provide and facilitate housing that people can afford
- Create employment opportunities through regeneration
- Support high quality development of strategic sites
- Support our business community and attract new inward investment
- Maximise opportunities for digital infrastructure improvements and smart places technology

Environment

- Provide leadership in our own operations by reducing carbon emissions, energy consumption and waste
- Engage with residents and businesses to encourage them to act in more environmentally sustainable ways through their waste, travel, and energy choices
- Work with partners to make travel more sustainable and reduce congestion
- Make every effort to protect and enhance our biodiversity and natural environment.

Community

- Tackling inequality in our communities
- Work with communities to support those in need
- Support the unemployed back into the workplace and facilitate opportunities for residents to enhance their skills
- Prevent homelessness and rough-sleeping in the borough

Time limits on speeches at full Council meetings:	
Public speaker:	3 minutes
Response to public speaker:	3 minutes
Questions from councillors:	3 minutes
Response to questions from councillors:	3 minutes
Proposer of a motion:	10 minutes
Seconder of a motion:	5 minutes
Other councillors speaking during the debate on a motion:	5 minutes
Proposer of a motion's right of reply at the end of the debate on the motion:	10 minutes
Proposer of an amendment:	5 minutes
Seconder of an amendment:	5 minutes
Other councillors speaking during the debate on an amendment:	5 minutes
Proposer of a motion's right of reply at the end of the debate on an amendment:	5 minutes
Proposer of an amendment's right of reply at the end of the debate on an amendment:	5 minutes

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

To receive and note any disclosable pecuniary interests from councillors. In accordance with the local Code of Conduct, a councillor is required to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) that they may have in respect of any matter for consideration on this agenda. Any councillor with a DPI must not participate in any discussion or vote regarding that matter and they must also withdraw from the meeting immediately before consideration of the matter.

If that DPI has not been registered, the councillor must notify the Monitoring Officer of the details of the DPI within 28 days of the date of the meeting.

Councillors are further invited to disclose any non-pecuniary interest which may be relevant to any matter on this agenda, in the interests of transparency, and to confirm that it will not affect their objectivity in relation to that matter.

3. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 36)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023.

4. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

To receive any communications or announcements from the Mayor.

5. LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive questions or statements from the public in relation only to the business for which this extraordinary meeting has been called.

7. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

To hear questions from councillors of which due notice has been given in relation only to the business for which this extraordinary meeting has been called.

8. FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE REPORT (Pages 37 - 58)

9. APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM SECTION 151 OFFICER (Pages 59 - 76)

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Minutes of a meeting of Guildford Borough Council held at Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on Tuesday 25 July 2023

* The Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah

* The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sallie Barker MBE

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| * Councillor Bilal Akhtar | * Councillor Steven Lee |
| Councillor Phil Bellamy | * Councillor Sandy Lowry |
| Councillor Dawn Bennett | * Councillor Richard Lucas |
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore | * Councillor Julia McShane |
| * Councillor David Bilbe | * Councillor Richard Mills |
| * Councillor Honor Brooker | * Councillor Carla Morson |
| * Councillor James Brooker | Councillor Danielle Newson |
| * Councillor Philip Brooker | * Councillor Patrick Oven |
| * Councillor Ruth Brothwell | * Councillor George Potter |
| Councillor Yves de Contades | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| * Councillor Amanda Creese | * Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith |
| * Councillor Geoff Davis | * Councillor David Shaw |
| Councillor Jason Fenwick | * Councillor Joanne Shaw |
| * Councillor Matt Furniss | * Councillor Katie Steel |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | * Councillor Howard Smith |
| Councillor Lizzie Griffiths | Councillor Cait Taylor |
| * Councillor Gillian Harwood | * Councillor Jane Tyson |
| * Councillor Stephen Hives | * Councillor James Walsh |
| * Councillor Catherine Houston | * Councillor Fiona White |
| * Councillor Tom Hunt | * Councillor Dominique Williams |
| * Councillor Bob Hughes | * Councillor Keith Witham |
| * Councillor James Jones | Councillor Sue Wyeth-Price |
| * Councillor Vanessa King | * Councillor Catherine Young |

*Present

Honorary Alderman Keith Childs was also in attendance.

CO25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dawn Bennett, Phil Bellamy, Yves de Contades, Jason Fenwick, Lizzie Griffiths, Danielle Newson, Cait Taylor, and Sue Wyeth-Price, and from Honorary Freeman Keith Churchouse, and Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Vas Kapsalis, Jayne Marks, Terence Patrick, Tony Phillips, Lynda Strudwick, Nick Sutcliffe, and Jenny Wicks.

CO26 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Joss Bigmore disclosed an interest in relation to agenda item 9, Appointments to External Organisations 2023-2027 (Minutes CO33) in that he was the Chair of the Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to which the Council would be appointing a governor. As the governors were directly responsible for his employment in that capacity he would withdraw from the meeting during consideration of that appointment.

No other interests were disclosed.

CO27 MINUTES

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 1 June 2023 were approved as a correct record. The Mayor signed the minutes.

CO28 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported that, on Sunday 23 July, he had been invited to the Castle Green Bowling Club's Centenary Celebration. He was accompanied by the Leader of the Council, and other guests.

On Sunday, 10 September, the Mayor would be hosting a charity Adult Football Tournament, in collaboration with Guildford City Boys and Girls Football Club, in aid of his chosen charity The Fountain Centre. Invitations to register had been sent to local men's and women's football teams.

CO29 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader drew councillors' attention to the Executive membership details, including portfolio titles and responsibilities, attached at Appendix 1 to the Order Paper.

The Leader announced that the Community Wellbeing team had been named as a finalist in the prestigious BBC "Make a Difference Awards". Out of thousands of nominations, Community Wellbeing really stood out as a shining example of dedication and commitment to improving the lives of those around us. The Leader congratulated the team for this amazing nomination.

Residents would shortly be asked to check that their electoral registration details were up to date. From 4 August we would begin the annual canvass by emailing or writing to every household in the borough, encouraging residents to respond as soon as they could. In particular, we would like potential first-time voters to be aware of their right to register. This included 16-17 year olds who could register ahead of their 18th birthday.

The Leader noted that there was potential funding available for climate change projects, and organisations and community groups were encouraged to contact our Climate Change Officer nat.prodger@guildford.gov.uk to find out more.

Last month, the Surrey Environment Partnership (SEP) waste reduction scheme, Rethink Waste, was rolled out to the whole of Surrey. Any resident with a Surrey postcode could now join the scheme, take part and start receiving rewards for reducing their waste. Further details were available on the SEP website.

CO30 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public had registered to speak or ask a question at the meeting.

CO31 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Councillors noted that, at the Selection Meeting, the Council received three written questions from Councillors Brooker, Akhtar, and Hughes, all of which were directed at the Leader of the Council. As the Leader was elected at that meeting, no written response to the questions could be prepared for inclusion on the Order Paper for that meeting, and Council was informed that a formal response from the Leader to each of the questions would be circulated to all councillors.

That response was sent, by email, to all councillors on 1 June 2023.

As there had been no opportunity for the questioners to ask a supplementary question, the Mayor had agreed to allow this at this meeting.

(a) **Councillor Philip Brooker** asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

“Can the Leader confirm what her plans are to increase social housing in the Borough? How many social houses do you intend to provide on a year-on-year basis over the next four years, what sites have been allocated for this, and how will it be financed?”

The Leader’s Response:

“The Council’s Local Plan seeks delivery of affordable housing as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Plan includes a requirement for at least 40% of homes on qualifying schemes to be affordable housing provision, the delivery of which is generally secured via section 106 agreement. The quantum of affordable homes delivered through this mechanism is determined in the first instance by the number and size of schemes that the Council permits and that are subsequently delivered, and in

the second instance by whether the required 40% contribution is secured on these sites as part of the planning permission. In this regard, a range of sites, including several allocated in the Local Plan, already benefit from planning permission and will deliver required affordable homes over the coming four years. Further, the Council's Land Availability Assessment reflects several sites which may contribute to affordable housing delivery during the next four years, but are dependent on receiving planning permission in order to commence. We expect an increase in the annual delivery of affordable homes as qualifying sites are permitted and built out.

With regard to the Council's own development, the Housing Revenue Account Development programme was approved by the Council in February 2023 and details of this were set out within the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy 2023-24. This can be found on the agenda for the Council meeting on Wednesday 8 February 2023.

The Strategy confirms that the programme will be funded from the Housing Revenue Account Capital receipts and reserves with a current planned investment of £145m and currently includes 152 homes.

As for future plans, these will remain under review and will be brought forward as they develop. The official definition of affordable in Surrey is far above what is genuinely affordable, and we continue to be constrained by the Conservative government's Right to Buy policy. We are committed to providing council homes for rent and for shared ownership to help those needing an affordable place to live".

In response to a supplementary question asking what plans were in place to improve on the delivery of additional social housing, the Leader stated that the terms "social housing" and "affordable housing" were interchangeable and that the Council was already planning to provide affordable housing/social housing on Guildford Park Road as well as Weyside Urban Village, and within a small portfolio of other developments to be brought forward, details of which would be forthcoming.

- (b) **Councillor Bilal Akhtar** asked the Leader of the Council the following question:
"Can the Leader confirm the number of staff currently employed in the Council's planning enforcement team and also outline any intention to recruit additional staff to the Council's planning enforcement team?"

The Leader's Response:

"The current establishment within the Planning Enforcement team consists of 1 team leader/1 Senior Enforcement Officer and 4 Planning Enforcement Officers. The team has experienced both periods of staff sickness and periods of vacancies over the last 9 months. Following a recruitment campaign 2 vacancies (senior planning enforcement officer and enforcement planning officer) have been recruited to. One of the appointments was an internal appointment, and there is currently an advert for the vacant post. There is currently no approved funding, or plans, to recruit additional staff to the Planning Enforcement team."

In response to a supplementary question seeking a commitment to the Council that there would be no job losses in the Planning Enforcement Team in view of the current financial situation of the Council, the Leader indicated that she would not know the answer to that question until the work proposed in the financial recovery plan had been completed.

The Leader confirmed, in response to a further question, that the number of staff in the enforcement team had increased as a result of Future Guildford due to the pressure of work that the team was under.

(c) **Councillor Bob Hughes** asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

"Can the Leader please confirm how much the Council has so far spent on agency and temporary staff in 2022-23 across the organisation? What is the projected budget for 2023-24? And can you confirm how much the Council has spent so far on consultants in 2022-23? What is the projected budget for 2023-24?"

The Leader's Response:

"In 2022-23 the Council spent £4.18m on temporary staff and £28.68m on consultancy support. £25.3m of that consultancy spend related to capital expenditure. This data will not be fully validated until the Finance Team bring their Annual Agency and Consultancy Spend Report to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July. The projected costs of temporary and consultancy support for 2023-24 have not yet been calculated but these will be provided in future quarterly budget monitoring reports".

In response to a supplementary question asking whether the Leader:

1) would publish a breakdown of spending for temporary staff by department, and separately for consultancy support,

- 2) would outline in writing how the work was competitively tendered, and
- 3) was concerned that amounts paid to many consultants were much higher than usual industry rates?

the Leader indicated that this further information could be supplied.

- (d) **Councillor Maddie Redpath** asked the Lead Councillor for Planning, Environment, and Climate Change, Councillor George Potter the following question:

“The early summer has seen a larger number of Unauthorised Encampments than in recent years. The effects have been significant on the regular users of our Parks and Recreation Grounds, with events such as the Park Run cancelled, and anti-social and intimidating behaviour affecting the enjoyment of our award-winning green spaces. There are also significant management and clean-up costs that our Council Tax payers have to bear.

1. *What is the Lead Councillor doing to review and improve the physical deterrents around our parks and green spaces?*
2. *What is the latest update on the long-promised Surrey Transit Site?*
3. *It is also disappointing that the Police have not used the extra powers they have been granted to expedite the removal process, can you explain why?”*

The Lead Councillor’s Response:

1. *What is the Lead Councillor doing to review and improve the physical deterrents around our parks and green spaces?*

Unauthorised encampments are managed through Regulatory Services with the operational support of the department upon whose land an unauthorised encampment has occurred. Whilst we endeavour to respond to queries, we would generally update our website and follow published process for managing an unauthorised encampment. We would therefore ask concerned residents to check our website for information and updates first:

<https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/26846/Find-out-more-about-Unauthorised-Encampments>

The Parks Team work hard to limit the opportunities for unauthorised access, and our defences are reviewed and updated following any unauthorised access. We have visited each park and created risk assessments for unauthorised access resulting in many improvements to upgrade and install defences over the years.

In most areas we use earth bunds as the most cost-effective measure, but also use other methods such as boulders, tree and hedge planting also drop-down posts behind gates. Examples of this approach in practice are Bellfields Green and Shalford Common. These sites are large open spaces with fine views without boundaries surrounded by housing. This was risk assessed and schemes were designed to protect the site boundaries that we consulted residents about. These open spaces were protected in 2020 by a combination of knee-high rails, bunds, new tree planting, timber bollards and wildflower planting. Recent unauthorised accesses have focused on legitimate and needed access points using a variety of means to defeat locked gates and barriers. As a result, the parks team are placing concrete blocks and procuring further bollards in vulnerable points, in particular access gates.

A balance needs to be struck between the general appearance of the site, cost, the need for legitimate access, including for emergency access such as an ambulance, and the potential deterrent. Unfortunately, there are no defences that are unbreachable and in the event of an unauthorised encampment we must follow due legal processes. Over recent years in Stoke Park the Parks Team have installed new earth bunds at the Wildwood Car Park, strengthened/ replaced earth bunds at London Road and near the Bowling Club. We also replaced the entrance gates from the Nightingale Road Car park adding height barriers and new Estate Fencing. At present, Stoke Park is surrounded by fencing, ditches and earth bunds in all locations except access points. These are protected by locked gates and barriers.

Following the most recent unauthorised access of Stoke Park through the grounds of Guildford High School, the Parks Team have placed concrete blocks at a number of access gates. We have met with Guildford High School who will also place additional bollards in front of this gate. We will be replacing these blocks with metal bollards to allow speedier legitimate access this month. Further bollards are in the process of being installed at all gates at Onslow Arboretum and Dann's Meadow in Ash.

2. **What is the latest update on the long-promised Surrey Transit Site?**
*Surrey County Council has provided the following update:
"The Pendell Camp site (between Merstham and Bletchingley) is under review following further engagement with planning. The commitment*

to take forward remains, and the focus is on ensuring the planning application has the best chance of achieving approval. The specific work underway at the moment refers to works that are needed to the northern permanent site, which should make the planning application for the southern/transit site more acceptable in planning terms.”

3. *It is also disappointing that the Police have not used the extra powers they have been granted to expedite the removal process, can you explain why?*

We have asked the Police to comment on this, and their response is as follows:

‘In Guildford we have been very proactive in using our powers when they are proportionate and justified and have recently used them over May and June in removing Unauthorised Encampments (UEs) from Shalford, Guildford Spectrum and Onslow.

There are set criteria that need to be met to use these new powers to remove a UE and that threshold is not always met. If the threshold is not met then the UEs are kept under constant review by police and sometimes after a period of time the criteria is then met, and we will use powers available to us. The key point in the new legislation is they have caused, or are likely to cause, significant damage, disruption, or distress. This means that it would have to be significant rather than just an annoyance to the local community. In some cases, moving on a UE will cause more harm as they move to a less suitable/ safe site. We have no alternative site in Surrey so are unable to direct the UE to that location. Sometimes using these powers may cause a bigger impact on the community and we should ensure that the action we take is proportionate, justified, and necessary.

It is also important to point out that the offence is when the person fails to comply with the request to leave and not just by setting up a camp. The key part in the legislation is ‘The offence will be committed if a person who resides or intends to reside with a vehicle on land fails to leave the land or remove their property without reasonable excuse when asked to do so and they have caused, or are likely to cause, significant damage, disruption, or distress.’

In all cases of a reported UE police will as soon as possible attend the location and make an initial assessment, speak with those residents of the encampment, and issue a code of conduct. We work with the local authority and discuss our options and powers. Just because this legislation exists it does not mean it will always be the best option just like arresting someone is not always the only or most suitable option for a criminal offence.

In many cases removal of a UE is led by the local authority. Police regularly visit the UE throughout and conduct reassessments. Crime/ASB and disorder is monitored and anything that is linked to the UE is identified.

Key decisions need to be made by police around how we use this legislation. What we often find is that we may have complaints from residents about a UE but there is no evidence of damage, disruption or distress and nothing to support the use of these powers in showing it is significant. We encourage residents to report all incidents to Surrey Police via 999 in an emergency or 101 / online in non-emergency cases.

The guidance published by the home office in relation to this new legislation stipulates that police should liaise with local authorities and any action should be driven through a multi agency response. It does not state the police must lead. The guidance goes on to say that local authorities should take the lead and the police support this. Finally, the guidance stipulates the decision upon which these powers are used remains at the discretion of the police.

I understand a UE can cause concerns for residents and want to reassure them that when justified and proportionate police will robustly use powers available to us as we have done in the past. I am more than happy to discuss with councillors the legislation and why there are limitations on its use.'

In response to a supplementary question asking whether the hard work undertaken by council officers in this regard could be advertised more openly, the Lead Councillor confirmed that he would be very happy to

consider new ways of promoting and communicating the excellent work undertaken by officers.

- (e) **Councillor Keith Witham** asked the Lead Councillors for Planning, Environment, and Climate Change, and Regulatory and Democratic Services, Councillors George Potter and Merel Rehorst-Smith the following question:

*“Residents of Ash Road, Worplesdon are seriously concerned regarding the use of the premises “Greenways” on Ash Road, Fox Corner by “Applenet Care and Support” to house ex-offenders and others with mental health issues, despite the provider **NOT** having planning consent for that, or any other commercial use, and **NOT** having been licenced by GBC Licensing as an HMO (House in Multiple Occupation), with multiple incidents reported to the police of anti-social behaviour affecting the immediate area, including arson.*

Fox Corner is a small rural residential area, located in between Guildford and Woking. It is an isolated area with a limited bus service, and miles from community facilities such as food shops or any employment opportunities in either Woking or Guildford and totally unsuitable for such an establishment.

So would the Executive Members for Planning/ Enforcement and Regulatory Services please update the Council on the investigations carried out into the Planning and Enforcement situation, and the HMO licence, and the current position regarding Greenways, Ash Road, Worplesdon?”.

The Lead Councillors’ Response:

“The Council’s Private Sector Housing Team have been investigating the use of the building as a house in multiple occupation (HMO). They have been in discussion with Applenet Care and Support who work with Surrey County Council to re-integrate individuals back into the community. Whilst there have been issues reported by residents, Applenet Care and Support have taken steps to address issues such as the lack of boundary fencing, and they have installed CCTV on-site. Officers have also reviewed the company’s complaints procedure and ensured that procedures and processes are in place to control and respond to ASB including enabling local residents to report any issues directly to the company.

Officers have also worked with the Police in respect of the alleged arson and anti-social behaviour. We are advised that there was insufficient evidence to substantiate the alleged arson. There has been one other report

to the Police regarding insulting behaviour that was between individuals inside the property.

After a thorough evaluation, officers within Regulatory Services have advised that they have found there was not sufficient evidence of current and ongoing anti-social behaviour or other valid reasons to refuse to licence the property as a house in multiple occupation under the Housing Act 2004. The property has therefore now been licensed as a house in multiple occupation for up to 6 persons. The licence was issued on 17 July 2023 and is valid for 5 years. This licence simply confirms that the property is suitable to be occupied by up to 6 residents not forming a single household and imposes standards in respect of amenities, means of escape in case of fire and controlling ASB.

In terms of planning, the Planning Enforcement Team are of the opinion that the use currently happening at the property is within Use Class C2, which relates to residential institutions including residential care homes. The applicants are refuting this and are claiming the current use of the property falls within Use Class C3 (dwellinghouses) and specifically subsection b) which includes within the definition of a dwellinghouse the use by not more than six residents living together as a single household where care is provided for residents. The Planning Enforcement Team understand the applicants are currently collating a Certificate of Lawfulness to argue their point, providing the Local Planning Authority an opportunity to consider any further evidence they have and present a formal view on the use of the property through the lawful development certificate process.”

In response to a supplementary question the lead councillors confirmed that they would be very happy to meet with the residents and local ward councillors to discuss the matter further.

- (f) **Councillor James Walsh** asked the Lead Councillor for Commercial Services, Councillor Catherine Houston the following question:

“Grassroots football is an important “social glue” that binds communities, clubs and individuals together in many British towns. Our local club, Guildford City FC is 102 years-old this year and has played at the Spectrum since 1996. Unfortunately, its current venue is no longer fit for purpose and the club was denied promotion in 2012 because it failed a ground grading inspection that year. Can the Lead Councillor for Commercial Services tell the Council what discussions she has had, or plans to have, to help ensure

that Guildford City Football Club will have a ground and facilities within the borough fit for the 21st century?"

The Lead Councillor's Response:

"Thank you, Councillor Walsh, for your question around support for Guildford City Football Club, something we as an administration wish to continue. There has been a lot of activity on this matter over the last couple of months in an attempt to get to the crux of the issues you raise. Following a meeting with the Club in late May to discuss the state of the pitch, which the Leader and Ian Doyle, one of our strategic directors attended, a list of concerns and questions were raised by the Club. I am pleased to report that subsequently a tri-partite meeting took place at The Spectrum with Freedom Leisure, Guildford City Football Club and Guildford Borough Council earlier this month to look at the issues raised by the Club and agree a way forward. All issues raised at the earlier onsite meeting were discussed in detail and an action plan set out. As reported recently in the 'Guildford Dragon', the Club felt the meeting was both useful and productive.

The key challenge accepted by all parties is the dual use element of the ground and the lack of the Club's status on the site. They book the pitch annually, therefore there is no long-term arrangement, such as a lease, that would allow them to attract external funding. There are also definitely pinch points when athletics and football use collide. We will work hard with all parties to create a more effective way of operating going forward but some issues will be difficult to resolve by the very nature of the site, which has not changed since 1996 when the Club moved in. I have asked officers to keep me apprised of the actions being taken and report any feedback."

In response to a supplementary question asking whether any particular sites had been looked at as an alternative, more permanent, home venue for the football club, the lead councillor, noting the Council's difficult financial position, indicated that there had been an initial site meeting on 18 May 2023 involving the Council, the MP, Freedom Leisure and the Football Club to look at the issues, and a further meeting held on 3 July, at which it was concluded that finding a suitable, alternative venue would be a difficult problem to resolve. Councillors were asked, if they considered that a particular site in their own ward might be suitable for a football pitch and associated facilities, to come forward with possible suggestions. Once a suitable site had been identified, and planning permission secured, possible sources of external funding could be looked at.

(g) **Councillor Joss Bigmore** asked the Lead Councillor for Planning, Environment, and Climate Change, Councillor George Potter the following question:

“The Review of the Local Plan is due to be completed at the latest by the end of April next year. As things stand there have been no changes in the National Legislation which means that GBC’s Local Plan will be out of date as there is the more recent ‘Standard Method’ now used to calculate housing need.

Ceteris paribus this would mean GBC needing to find another 200 homes a year to justify having a robust 5-year Housing supply when assessing applications, failure to do that could see the resultant tilted balance allowing speculative unplanned development. This will be a concerning situation to many residents, already uncomfortable with the quantum of development we are seeing today.

Could the Lead Councillor for Planning, Environment and Climate Change please explain what preparations are being made so that GBC is ready with evidence to counter the housing need as calculated by the Standard Method?”

The Lead Councillor’s Response:

The Government has continued to signal their intention to revise the Standard Method given its reliance on now outdated 2014-based household projections. The latest announcement earlier this year indicated that they would publish a revised Standard Method in early 2024. This may bring Guildford’s figure down from the current figure of approximately 780 dwellings per annum closer to the current Local Plan annual requirement figure of 562.

Whilst planning practice guidance states that the Standard Method figure is not mandatory, an alternative figure is only expected to be found acceptable in exceptional circumstances with robust evidence that would be scrutinised at a local plan examination. In the meantime, if the review of the Local Plan concludes that the housing requirement figure requires updating, the future five-year land supply calculation will need to be assessed against the Standard Method figure for the entire period during which the local plan is being updated. Until there is greater clarity in terms of how the Standard Method will be amended and therefore what opportunities may exist for Guildford specific circumstances to justify deviation from this, it is neither possible nor appropriate to commission

what would otherwise be abortive work by the time an updated plan is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination (plan preparation would take a number of years). Thus, it is only as part of a Local Plan update that the Council will investigate the possibility of reducing the local housing need figure according to the Standard Method. Despite this, preparatory work will continue in order to inform the Formal Review of the Local Plan. This will include, when appropriate, gathering a proportionate and relevant evidence base to understand any changed circumstances affecting the borough. Work will be progressing to populate the templates created by the Planning Advisory Service in order to determine whether or not the local plan policies, and therefore the Plan itself, need to be updated.

In the meantime, the priority will remain the continued effort to bring forward existing allocations in a timely and sustainable manner to maintain future delivery rates. Doing so increases the possibility that Guildford may be able to continue to demonstrate a five-year land supply even when the current figure of 562 is no longer applicable and reduces opportunities for additional speculative unplanned development that may otherwise be permitted at appeal due to the tilted balance working in favour of the developer”.

Councillor Bigmore asked a supplementary question inviting the lead councillor to comment on why the Council was not preparing for a scenario of no change being made to the standard method and the Council being unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply after 30 April 2024. In response, the lead councillor denied that the Council was unprepared for that scenario. Based on current advice and guidance, the lead councillor confirmed that a review of the Local Plan would need to be completed by 30 April 2024, recognising that this was a difficult position to be in. The review would need to start before the end of the year and the Council would need to make a judgement at that time in terms of possible changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the standard method. The five-year housing land supply would still exist on 30 April, but the emphasis would be on the delivery of allocated sites and keeping track of windfall developments. However, if the Council could not demonstrate a five-year housing supply, the immediate alternative would effectively be a choice between identifying new sites, or wait for the government to update the standard method.

In response to a further question inviting the lead councillor to consider urgently reconvening the Local Plan Panel, the lead councillor confirmed that

details of a new Planning Policy Board (which would replace the Local Plan Panel) would shortly be submitted to group leaders.

The lead councillor was also asked whether he thought Guildford would fall below the five-year housing land supply especially given that the Office for National Statistics had indicated the Guildford's population growth had been exaggerated and, if that was the case, it followed that housing need had also been exaggerated. In response, the lead councillor indicated that he would assess Guildford's housing land supply currently, as decent to good. However, the standard method as currently stated in the National Planning Policy Framework had a target of around 760 houses a year for Guildford, which was significantly in excess of the target adopted within the local plan. The Lead councillor accepted that this was not in line with the population growth projections for Guildford from the Office for National Statistics. As the standard method was set by the government, we were obliged to use it until it was changed. The Council can try to mitigate against it, and demonstrate reasons why it should not be applied in full. However, it was the starting point from which we had to work so therefore if the standard method did not change, then that would have a significant impact on our housing land supply, and whether or not it takes us down below the five-year level remained to be seen.

(h) **Councillor Catherine Young** asked the Lead Councillor for Planning, Environment, and Climate Change, Councillor George Potter the following question:

"In 2019 Guildford Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency. Climate Change is now at the heart of all that we do (or should be), and prior to the May Elections, the Executive signed off GBC's Climate Change 'Living Action Plan.

It is almost four months since the Climate Change Board (CCB) last met. Would the Lead Councillor please confirm that Climate Change remains a priority for this Council and indicate when the CCB will reconvene?

Additionally, it is noted that despite numerous training sessions and briefings arranged for new Councillors there has not been one scheduled on the Climate Change Action Plan. Would the Lead Councillor agree to arrange this before the Autumn so that all Councillors are up to speed on actions and progress to date?

With this in mind, can the Lead Councillor also commit to provide a full update on the Action Plan to Full Council at the meeting to be held on 10 October 2023."

The Lead Councillor's Response:

"Thank you, Councillor Young for your question. I am happy to confirm that tackling climate change remains a top priority for this Council.

Terms of reference for the Climate Change Board (CCB) have now been circulated to group leaders with a request for nominations to join the CCB. Once membership has been agreed the intention is to have an initial meeting as soon as possible and to put in place a regular schedule of meetings thereafter.

The delay in reconstituting the CCB following the election is regrettable, and as portfolio holder I wish to apologise for the delay. Whilst the delay in reconstituting the CCB has not delayed the implementation of the adopted Climate Change Action Plan by officers, it has deprived councillors of a chance to have cross-party oversight and input and I am sorry for that.

*I agree with you that training for councillors and officers is important and note that we have made a firm commitment, within action 2.14 of the climate action plan adopted by the Executive in February, to 'identify training needs for staff, councillors and other stakeholders on the climate emergency and the impact of decisions on carbon emissions'. As noted in the action plan, there will be a need to provide different types of training for different audiences, but I do agree that it is very important that councillors are offered training on this important area of work. I have asked officers to bring forward proposals for how this action can be delivered in the near future. Please note, a new climate change course has been developed and is available through **Surrey Learn**. The course aims to outline the fundamental issues regarding climate change and is accredited by The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Standards Office with attendees receiving two CPD hours. The Climate Change Team are awaiting confirmation whether this course can be rolled out to both staff and Members. Further training development is required to provide a focus on Guildford and our response to climate change.*

In terms of future updates on the delivery of the climate action plan, the Executive resolved in February that updates would be brought forward by officers or the Climate Change Board on an annual basis; we are aiming to

bring the first of these to the Executive by the end of the calendar year at the latest”.

- (i) **Councillor David Bilbé** asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane the following question:

“Can the Leader of the Council assure this Council and members of the public that stringent financial measures necessary to balance the budget now and in the medium term will not affect service to the public? If not, then what services will be affected?”

The Leader’s Response:

“The financial situation has been set out clearly in the report at Item 8 on the Council Agenda. The Council must take urgent action now to address its financial sustainability. This will require a significant reduction in the General Fund revenue budget and ultimately will impact on service provision. The Council, led by the task force, will be going through a process as set out in the report to identify and implement an action plan to achieve this objective. The Executive intend to ensure the most vulnerable within our borough are prioritised along with statutory services being delivered legally.

The challenge will be met through a genuine team effort involving members and officers in the decision making and every decision will be taken with the best interests of the residents of the borough at its core. There is a lot of work ahead of us and it cannot be stressed more highly that it is in everyone’s best interests to work together on this challenge”.

In response to a supplementary question, the Leader confirmed that it was proposed to establish an Executive Working Group, rather than the “informal cross-party councillor reference group” referred to in the Budget Update report.

- (j) **Councillor Philip Brooker** asked the Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development, Councillor Carla Morson the following question:

“Would the Lead Councillor for Community and Organisational Development advise what are the current staff absence rates and staff turnover rates for last available quarter? How do these compare with the same period last year and the same quarter in 2019? How do those figures benchmark against other Councils in Surrey?”

The Lead Councillor's Response:

- 1) *The current staff absence rates and staff turnover rates for the last available quarter:*

Quarter 1: 2023-24

All absence – 8.6 days

Short term absence – 5.9 days

Turnover – 16.5%

Note: Turnover in this period includes the TUPE transfer of 'on street' Parking Services staff to a contractor.

The figures for Q1 2023-24 with the exclusion of the TUPE transfer of 'on street' parking staff, are as follows:

All absence - 8.3 days

short term absence - 5.7 days

Turnover - 15.5%

- 2) *Comparison with the same period last year and the same quarter in 2019*

Quarter 1: 2022-23

All absence – 8.2 days

Short term absence – 5.6 days

Turnover – 15.1%

Quarter 1: 2019-20

All absence – 7.4 days

Short term absence – 4.1 days

Turnover – 10.5%

- 3) *Benchmarking data for Councils in Surrey will be provided direct to councillors as soon as we have permission from other councils to share their data."*

As a supplementary question, Councillor Brooker asked the lead councillor what measures were being put in place to improve on these outcomes and when would they be implemented, and noting the specific rises within Guildford since 2019, whether the lead councillor believed that the working environment had deteriorated and, if so, how that could be

rectified? In response, the lead councillor confirmed that sickness absence and turnover rates were measured on a quarterly basis for our corporate performance indicators, and this data was also provided to the Surrey Chief Executives' Benchmarking Group. The lead councillor stated that Guildford was a good place to work, and that the HR service was working to improve the situation.

In response to a further question, enquiring whether staff were interviewed on the reasons for their sickness absence and whether councillors could see some of the responses, appropriately anonymised, the lead councillor confirmed that staff were contacted by their line managers through periods of sickness absences, and that she would check whether the data requested could be anonymised and circulated to councillors.

- (k) **Councillor Bob Hughes** asked the Lead Councillor for Commercial Services, Councillor Catherine Houston the following question:

"Has the Lead Councillor for Commercial services written to the Cabinet of Surrey County Council to thank them for making a £3 million grant to the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre - the largest ever grant from Your Fund Surrey, thereby securing its future and facilitating the provision of a greater range of accessible services to the people of Guildford?"

Will she agree that in light of this and other significant community projects now funded by Your Fund Surrey, that the Conservative Council were right to ignore their political opponents and persist with this valuable scheme?"

The Lead Councillor's Response:

"I am pleased to see the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre being awarded some funding, even if it is less than half what they applied for. The Yvonne Arnaud not only makes excellent productions available to their main audience but also does a lot of very good work in the community which is not so widely publicised.

Having said that it is not appropriate for this Council to be discussing the merits of another Council's decision-making, especially when we have serious matters to discuss this evening, matters which will affect all our residents."

In response to a supplementary question enquiring as to whether there was a factual inaccuracy in the written answer given by the lead councillor on the basis

that it stated that the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre had been awarded some funding even if it was less than half of what they applied for. The total cost of the project for the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre was approximately £6 million and they asked for and received just under £3 million from Surrey County Council's Your Fund Surrey, which was the largest grant awarded. The balance of the cost was being raised, or had already been raised, by the Theatre from its own sources. In response, the lead councillor apologised if she had given inaccurate information, as she had been informed that the Theatre had applied for a grant in the sum of £8 million.

In response to a further question seeking assurance from the Leader of the Council, that this Council would continue to work constructively with Surrey County Council, the Leader indicated in the affirmative.

Although notice of the following additional questions had been received by the deadline for submission of questions for this meeting, they had not been forwarded to the Leader/relevant Lead Councillors until the day of the Council meeting. Accordingly, a written response to each of question would be circulated by the Leader/relevant lead councillors to all councillors after the meeting. The questioners would be afforded the opportunity of asking supplementary questions at the next Council meeting.

Question from Cllr. Richard Mills

Will the Leader of the Council indicate whether she will urgently bring forward proposals for a restriction on the maximum height for new buildings in the town, in the light of:

- the continuing development pressures that have driven a steady increase in permitted building height in particular in the Town Centre
- the evidence from recent years that the Council's planning procedures have not proved sufficient to control these pressures in line with the wishes of residents, and
- the evidence from the recent election campaign of wide support among residents from across the political spectrum for commitment to a maximum permitted building height, including from her executive portfolio holder for planning at election hustings.

Question from Cllr. David Bilbé

Will the Leader of the Council advise when will this Council see a fully costed plan for restoring the planning department to an improved level of competence with measurable timescales, targets and specific objectives?

Will the plan include a comprehensive set of proposals and staffing increases to improve the effectiveness of enforcement action, particularly to resolve significant planning infringements on Wanborough fields?

Question from Cllr. Bob Hughes

To ask the Executive Member for Community and Organisational Development: What measures are being taken by the Council to attract job applications from people with disabilities, and to sustain them in the workplace?

What input has the Council sought from organisations representative of people with lived experience of disabilities in order to take their advice to help the Council improve their recruitment and retention procedures and policies?

Questions from Cllr. Matt Furniss

1. Can the Leader of the Council confirm what is the valuation of the Council's commercial asset holdings in each year since 2019 to 2023?

In each year how much income was forecast to be generated and how much was actually generated?

2. In December 2020 Guildford, as one of the districts that commissioned a report by KPMG to look at opportunities for collaboration. Can the leader confirm:
 - a) The cost to GBC for producing the report?
 - b) An update as to what is the status of the KPMG report within GBC?
 - c) How many of its recommendations have been accepted and implemented?
 - d) Of the recommendations not accepted, why not?

Question from Cllr. Bilal Akhtar

Can the Leader Confirm the precise reasons for the three-year delay in opening the SANG and the car park in Frog Grove Lane in Wood Street, Worplesdon? The Car Park and Fences have been in place for over two years now.

According to the Officers, there is a delay in resolving an agreement with the landowner and the Council. What measures can be put in place to ensure that this matter can be resolved at the earliest possible time and what is the anticipated opening date?

CO32 GENERAL FUND BUDGET UPDATE

The Council considered a comprehensive report that set out a revised General Fund budget statement for 2023-24. The annual budget had been submitted to full Council in February 2023, at which point a deficit had been identified and the Joint Management Team had been asked to undertake a comprehensive financial review to identify a set of measures to address this deficit and to present a

restated budget for this meeting. A number of factors had been identified in the report as having influenced the Council's financial position and these were presently common to many other councils. Those factors included increasing demand for services, the state of the UK economy over the last year (with high inflation and rising interest rates), and a succession of government funding reductions over many years. For Guildford, a significant factor was the effect of rising interest rates in regard to borrowing in support of various infrastructure and regeneration projects that had increased the Council's overall debt.

The report had set out the findings of the comprehensive financial review and recommended actions to mitigate and reduce the risk of the Council reaching a declaration of a Section 114 notice and a financial recovery plan. A S114 Notice would require the Council to cease all non-essential expenditure and reduce operational and service delivery costs immediately. The report included recommendations to establish a task force to deliver the financial recovery plan.

The report had been considered by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee (CGSC) at a specially convened meeting on 18 July and by the Executive on 20 July. The comments arising from those meetings were set out in the Order Paper including the provision of a business case for additional planning resources, which had been included on the Order Paper, and a suggestion that a cross-party Executive working group be created to operate in a support and councillor communication role to oversee the financial recovery process.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Finance & Property, Councillor Richard Lucas, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) To approve the restated 2023-24 General Fund Revenue budget including the business case for additional planning resources.
- (2) To approve the repurposing of earmarked reserves as detailed in the report submitted to the Council.
- (3) To endorse the findings in the report.
- (4) To note the response by the Chief Finance (Section 151) Officer to the S114(3) duty and his recommended immediate actions including a range of expenditure controls, which will be managed through a Financial Control Panel consisting of Senior Officers and chaired by the Section 151 Officer.

- (5) To note that a financial recovery plan is being developed by the Chief Finance Officer in liaison with the Joint Management Team, together with milestones and delivery targets, to be reported to October Full Council for approval.
- (6) To endorse the management action of establishing a task force to deliver the financial recovery plan at pace, to provide the capacity, skills, and capability to support recovery.
- (7) To note that the Executive will set up an executive working group for the following purposes:
 - a) to receive and comment on regular updates on the Council's preparations for the Medium-Term Financial Plan restatement in October and its implementation;
 - b) to provide a sounding board for the Executive and officers on the options that are coming forward to close the projected financial gap; and
 - c) to guide wider communication with councillors and beyond.
- (8) To note that expenditure controls as a feature of how the Council conducts its business will remain in place until such time that the MTFP is balanced, and that such controls shall be determined by the Chief Finance Officer and the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Property.
- (9) To authorise the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive to draw down earmarked funding to provide capacity to address and deliver the financial recovery plan and note that the Chief Finance Officer will continue to engage with expert external assistance and advice.
- (10) To endorse the proposal to develop an asset disposal strategy to optimise the revenue impact from the divestment (via sale or otherwise) of the Council's assets and address the need to pay off debt, utilising external advice and support to ensure that best value returns are achieved.

- (11) To agree that a revised Medium-Term Financial Plan be brought to the Executive and Council in October 2023 and then reported quarterly to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.

Reason:

To enable the Council to set a balanced budget, which was a statutory requirement and a robust Medium-Term Financial Plan.

CO33 APPOINTMENTS TO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS 2023-27

The Council noted arrangements, following a review in 2017, for appointing councillors to various external organisations. Under these arrangements, the Council normally appointed councillors to such external organisations that:

- (i) supported the Council's Corporate priorities, and/or
- (ii) assisted in delivery of Council services, and/or
- (iii) were using Council facilities

Appointments would be for a four-year term up to the next Borough Council elections and all uncontested appointments would be confirmed by the Democratic Services and Elections Manager under delegated authority. In respect of appointments to external organisations that were normally reserved to full Council for confirmation, only those that were contested were referred to Council for determination.

Details of the contested 'Council appointments' and the respective nominees were set out in the Order Paper.

The Council noted at the meeting that:

- (a) Councillor Ruth Brothwell had withdrawn her nomination in respect of the appointment to Guildford Poyle Charities, which meant that Councillor Amanda Creese's nomination had been confirmed.
- (b) Councillor David Bilbè had withdrawn his nomination in respect of the appointment to the Council of Governors of the Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, which meant that Councillors Honor Brooker and Merel Rehorst-Smith were the remaining nominees.
- (c) Councillor Honor Brooker had withdrawn her nomination in respect of the appointment to the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre Management and Yvonne

Arnaud Theatre Trust, which meant that Councillor Steven Lee's nomination had been confirmed.

- (d) Councillor Bilal Akhtar had withdrawn his nomination in respect of the appointment to Oakleaf Enterprise, which meant that Councillor Angela Goodwin's nomination had been confirmed.

Each nominee had been given the opportunity to make either a written or an oral personal statement to the meeting in support of their nomination before the vote was taken. The Council noted that, where permissible under the relevant external organisation's constitution/ standing orders, the unsuccessful nominee would be the deputy to the appointee.

Having considered each nominee's representations, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Councillor Geoff Davis be appointed to the Farnborough Aerodrome Consultative Committee.
- (2) That Councillor Cait Taylor be appointed to Guildford Area Community Care.
- (3) That Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith be appointed to the Council of Governors of the Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.
- (4) That Councillor Danielle Newson be appointed to Watts Gallery (Limnerslease Committee).

Reason:

To ensure that, in the best interests of local people, the Council maintains and develops its relationship with key local organisations.

CO34 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH MEMBERS TO THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Council noted that Article 10 of the Constitution provided that the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee shall be comprised, amongst others, of up to three co-opted members of parish councils within the borough.

Following the local elections in May, all parish councils in the borough had been invited to submit nominations in respect of the three parish member

appointments. Serving parish members were eligible for re-appointment. Four nominations were received as follows:

- *Julia Osborn – Send Parish Council
- Simon Schofield – Normandy Parish Council
- Penny Tompkins – Shere Parish Council
- *Tim Wolfenden – Shalford Community Council

(* serving parish members)

As there were more nominations received than there were places on the Committee, each nominee was invited to submit a personal statement in support of their nomination and copies of these were circulated to all parish clerks on 23 June 2023 (copies were also appended to the report submitted to the Council).

Each parish council was then asked to cast its vote as to its preferred three candidates. The results of the ballot, which were set out on the Order Paper, were as follows:

Nominee:	Total no. of votes cast by parish councils:
Julia Osborn (Send PC)	13
Simon Schofield (Normandy PC)	8
Penny Tompkins (Shere PC)	8
Tim Wolfenden (Shalford CC)	11

NB. The turnout was 61% (14 of the 23 parish councils in the borough having voted).

Article 10 of the Constitution also stated that the results of the ballot shall inform the Council’s decision as to the co-option of parish members to the Committee.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Regulatory and Democratic Services, Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Julia McShane the Council

RESOLVED: That, taking into account the outcome of the ballot of parish councils and their respective personal statements, the Council appoints Julia Osborn and Tim Wolfenden as co-opted parish members of the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee for a term of office expiring in May 2027.

In relation to the third appointment, councillors noted that Simon Schofield and Penny Tompkins both received 8 votes from parish councils. The Council therefore took a

separate vote on this appointment taking into account the candidates' personal statements. The Council

RESOLVED: That Simon Schofield be appointed as a co-opted parish member of the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee for a term of office expiring in May 2027.

Reason:

To ensure the composition of the Committee included up to three co-opted parish members in accordance with Article 10 of the Council's Constitution.

CO35 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Council received and noted the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 16 March, 20 March, and 22 June 2023.

CO36 NOTICE OF MOTION DATED 13 JULY 2023: 7 DAY PLANNING NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, Councillor Bob Hughes proposed, and Councillor Richard Mills seconded the following motion:

“Council notes that on 22nd February 2023, the Council voted to remove the Member reference process known as the 7-day procedure. This decision removed a key part of democratic decision making from the planning process.

Council further notes that the decision was taken without any consultation of the public, or Parish Councils. It is likely that many including newly elected Councillors will believe that this Ward Councillor consultation process is still in place as it is still happening with older planning applications.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- (1) Reinstate the Member reference process (7-day procedure).
- (2) Apply the process to all current applications which are still to be determined following the decision taken by the Council on 22nd February 2023”.

Following the debate, the Council

RESOLVED: That the motion be not supported.

CO37 NOTICE OF MOTION DATED 13 JULY 2023: NORTH STREET

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, Councillor Matt Furniss proposed, and Councillor Richard Mills seconded the following motion:

“North Street

Background

Create Streets is an organisation that exists to help solve the housing crisis and to help neighbourhood, communities, landowners, councils and developers create and manage beautiful, sustainable places of gentle density that will be popular, are likely to be correlated with good wellbeing and public health outcomes and which are likely to prove good long-term investments based on the historical data of value appreciation and maintenance costs.

Create Streets was appointed by Surrey County Council to design The Healthy Streets for Surrey Guide, using their expertise to co-create beautiful, sustainable, prosperous, economically and socially successful places with strong local support.

On 25 October 2022, Surrey County Council’s Cabinet endorsed The Healthy Streets for Surrey Guide and agreed adoption of the guide as County Council policy for the design of streets in all new developments in the county. The digital version is now live <https://healthystreets.surreycc.gov.uk/> .

It is design guidance to create healthier and more sustainable streets for residents by prioritising air quality, physical activity and community wellbeing. The guidance discusses ways to achieve sustainable streets, such as developing safer walking and cycling routes, promoting public transport, and engaging with local communities.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities showcased The Healthy Streets for Surrey Guide on 22 June as one of the 25 Pathfinder Councils for showing leadership at the local level. By using design codes, we will enter a virtuous cycle of regenerative development. Design coding is a linchpin in Government’s ambitions for changes to the planning system. It is proposed to be mandatory for all local authorities in the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Bill. Associated themes of placemaking and beautiful and sustainable design are already embedded in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- (1) Appoint Create Streets to act as a ‘critical friend’ to review and make recommendations on the new North Street application submitted by St Edwards to the Council.
- (2) Add their comments to the appealed scheme which can be used in the Council’s evidence to defend the appeal.
- (3) Ask the Executive to endorse Surrey County Council’s Healthy Streets for Surrey Guide”.

Following the debate, the Council

RESOLVED: That the motion be not supported.

The meeting finished at 9.45 pm

Signed
Mayor

Date

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Guildford Borough Council

Report to: Council

Date: 30 August 2023

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Director: Transformation & Governance

Author: Richard Bates, Interim Executive Head of Finance

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Lead Councillor responsible: Richard Lucas (Finance and Property), Julia McShane (Leader)

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Report Status: Open

Financial Recovery Plan – Update Report

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. GBC agreed the 2023-24 budget in February 2023 with a £3.3m shortfall requiring further work to remove this gap, with the fallback position being the deployment of usable reserves.
- 1.2. The delayed audit of the 2020-21 accounts identified errors relating to accounting for COVID grants and the Collection Fund, which took place in 2021. These were both sums which were due to be repaid to the Government in 2021-22 rather than sums which were available for use by the Council.
- 1.3. The impact of this was that the level of usable reserves was around £20m less than had been thought when the 2023-24 budget was set in February 2023.

- 1.4. The budget outturn position for 2022-23 was an overspend of £6.4m on the General Fund and this has therefore further reduced the sums available to the Council.
- 1.5. An updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) position was presented to the Council at its meeting on 25 July 2023, which set out the key issues and the position in which the Council was now left. In summary this was a remaining in-year deficit of £1.7m and a budget gap of £18.3m over the MTFP period to 2026-27.
- 1.6. The report therefore concluded the Council is facing a potential s114 report if actions are not agreed to bring this situation back in to balance. The deadline set for this is October 2023.
- 1.7. The October report will set out the significant work required to avoid the other potential s114 trigger-point which is the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget in February 2024.
- 1.8. Over the past year, the Council has commissioned several due diligence workstreams to examine the issues identified in more detail. This has been done through a number of expert organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA), LG Futures, Arlingclose, and Savills, together with additional interim and experienced support within the Finance Team.
- 1.9. This work has helped to clarify the current position and set the baseline from which the Council now needs to work. It has also provided options for the Council to consider. Consideration and then implementation of these options will form an integral part of the Financial Recovery Plan.
- 1.10. The latest work completed is a review of the 2022-23 outturn position and Period 4 monitoring against the revised budget used for the July 2023 MTFP update. This shows that a number of the key areas of overspend in 2022-23 are continuing in the current financial

year and have the potential to take the Council into a far greater in-year deficit than the £1.64m set out in the July 2023 report.

- 1.11. Whilst a fully developed recovery plan will be presented to Council in October, sufficient work has been completed to provide an update report to this meeting. The first issue of the Financial Recovery Plan sets out some immediate actions to help reduce the in-year deficit, the workstreams proposed to aid development of the next MTFP and a work schedule for improvements in the financial procedures and processes within the Council.

2. Recommendation to Council

That the Council:

- 2.1 Endorses the first issue of the Financial Recovery Plan attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 2.2 Notes that a fully developed plan will be presented to the Council in October 2023.

3. Reason for Recommendation:

- 3.1 To enable the Council to protect the current level of reserves and to set a balanced budget and a robust Medium-Term Financial Plan.

4. Exemption from publication

- 4.1. None

5. Purpose of Report

- 5.1. This report sets out the first issue of the Council's Financial Recovery Plan for endorsement by the Council.
- 5.2. Key areas of the report deal with immediate actions to help address the in-year position, and the establishment of various workstreams

to aid both the medium-term budget position and improvements in financial management across the Council.

6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1. The budget underpins the Council's strategic framework and delivery of the Corporate Plan.

7. Background

- 7.1. The Council agreed the MTFP in February 2023 but with further work required at that stage to remove the need for reserves and balances to be used to close the in-year budget gap.
- 7.2. A number of issues were identified during the audit of the 2020-21 statement of accounts which led to the usable reserves of the Council being restated at a level of around £20 million less than previously reported.
- 7.3. Significant due-diligence work was undertaken to establish the baseline position and an updated General Fund budget was presented to Council in July 2023. This set out the gravity of the current financial position and raised the possibility of the Council issuing a s114 report if insufficient action was taken.

8. Consultations

- 8.1. The first issue of the Financial Recovery Plan has been reviewed and agreed by Corporate Management Board and the Financial Recovery Executive Working Group.

9. Key Risks

- 9.1. With depleted reserves, the key risk for the Council in the current financial year is that insufficient action is agreed to address the projected overspend which would have to be met from the remaining reserves and would further worsen the financial resilience of the Council, making a s114 position more likely.

- 9.2. The projected budget gap over the MTFP period is £18.3m and plans need to be developed to address this so that a balanced and robust budget can be agreed in February 2024.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. The recommended actions within the Financial Recovery Plan will help to reduce the in-year projected overspend and the MTFP budget gap.

11. Legal Implications

- 11.1. Section 151 Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and to secure that one officer has the responsibility for those affairs (the s151 officer).
- 11.2. The Council's legal duty to set a balanced budget is set out in section 31 Local Government Finance Act 1992, which provides that the Council must balance its expenditure with its revenue.
- 11.3. Section 114(3) Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires that: "The chief finance officer of a relevant authority shall make a report under this section if it appears to him that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure."
- 11.4. The Council must continue to act lawfully in making decisions on service delivery, regardless of any s114 report. There continues to be a requirement to conduct needs assessments, undertake consultation where appropriate, assess and have regard to equalities implications, and take into account all other relevant considerations to inform their decisions about service delivery.

12. Human Resource Implications

- 12.1. The Council is required to reduce operational and service delivery costs immediately. The immediate measures set out in the Financial

Recovery Plan will halt most recruitment, initially until October. This will therefore impact on workforce matters, including the recruitment of directly employed staff, as well as contingency workers, i.e., agency staff, interims, and consultants, although the risks of doing so will have to be considered before individual decisions are taken.

- 12.2. Arrangements are set out within the Recovery Plan for the consideration of exceptional cases, for example where there are significant Health and Safety risks, or the risk of statutory requirements not being met.
- 12.3. The Council will ensure careful and consistent communications to staff and unions and has drafted a communications plan to deliver this.

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 13.1. None at this point but will be considered as options are appraised in due course.

14. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 None at this point but will be considered as options are appraised in due course.

15. Summary of Options

- 15.1 Options will be developed through the workstreams set out within the Financial Recovery Plan and brought forward to councillors for decision as appropriate.

16. Conclusion

- 16.1 The first issue of the Financial Recovery plan sets out:
 - immediate actions to help constrain expenditure in the current financial year;

- a series of workstreams to close the MTFP gap and deliver a balanced budget for 2024-25;
- a series of key areas within the Finance function of the Council which require review and improvement.

17. Background Papers

General Fund Budget Update Report to Council 25 July 2023

18. Appendices

Appendix 1: Financial Recovery Plan 14 August 2023 (Issue 1)

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Guildford Borough Council

Financial Recovery Plan 1st Edition – 14 August 2023

Immediate Actions

1. Background

- 1.1. GBC agreed the 2023-24 budget in February 2023 with a £3.3m shortfall requiring further work to remove this gap, with the fallback position being the deployment of usable reserves.
- 1.2. There is a national backlog in the audit of statements of accounts and GBC were in a position where the last set to be signed off were for 2019-20. Two sets of accounts had therefore not been audited.
- 1.3. Audit of the 2020-21 accounts identified errors relating to accounting for COVID grants and the Collection Fund, which took place in 2021. These were both sums which were due to be repaid to the Government in 2021-22 rather than sums which were available for use by the Council. To be clear, these funds were correctly used by the Council and the balance repaid correctly, but an incorrect sum was attributed to unearmarked reserves. It is therefore not correct to say that GBC “lost” any amount or that it is still to be found to satisfy the conditions of the grants.
- 1.4. The impact of this was that the level of usable reserves was around £20m less than had been thought when the 2023-24 budget was set in February 2023.
- 1.5. The budget outturn position for 2022-23 was an overspend of £6.4m on the General Fund and this has therefore further reduced the sums available to the Council.
- 1.6. An updated MTFP position was presented to the Council in July 2023 which set out the key issues and the position in which the Council was now left. In summary this was a remaining in-year deficit of £1.7m and a budget gap of £18m over the MTFP period to 2026-27.

- 1.7. The report therefore concluded the Council is facing a potential s114 report if actions are not agreed to bring this situation back in to balance. The deadline set for this is October 2023.
- 1.8. The October report will set out the significant work required to avoid the other potential s114 trigger-point which is the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget in February 2024.

2. Current Position

- 2.1. Over the past year, the Council has commissioned several due diligence workstreams to examine the issues identified in more detail. This has been done through a number of expert organisations such as CIPFA, LG Futures, Arlingclose and Savills, together with additional interim and experienced support within the Finance Team.
- 2.2. This work has helped to clarify the current position and set the baseline from which the Council now needs to work. It has also provided options for the Council to consider. Consideration and then implementation of these options will form an integral part of this Financial Recovery Plan.

Ongoing impact of 2022-23 over-spend

- 2.3. The latest work completed is a review of the 2022-23 outturn position and Period 4 monitoring against the revised budget used for the July 2023 MTFP update.
- 2.4. This shows that a number of the key areas of overspend in 2022-23 are continuing in the current financial year and have the potential to take the Council into a far greater in-year deficit than the £1.64m set out in the July 2023 report.

2.5. The key issues are as follows:

- Staffing costs including establishment, agency, overtime, interims, and contractors – Risk £1.65m
 - Utilities costs – Risk £1m
 - Waste Removal and Service Fees – Risk £50k
- Other risks at this point include:
- Vacancy factor within the budget – Risk £0.7m but should be manageable through staff turnover.
 - Rental income – Risk £0.4m being evaluated in detail.
 - IT software – Risk £0.5m but should be manageable.

2.6. Offsetting these to some degree are a number of areas of historic underspends or income received in excess of budgets such as:

- “All staff” cost budgets £250k
- Equipment £50k
- Publications £40k
- Advertising £80k
- Transport £90k
- Vat & Printing £21k
- Car park fees £950k
- Sales £257k

2.7. The potential net impact of these issues if spend continues at the current rate would be a further £1m of overspend (and £1.6m known risks) within the current year on top of the £1.65m set out in the July 2023 report.

3. Proposed Actions – Immediate Establishment Control

- 3.1. Staffing budgets account for over half of the Council’s net budget. Significant work has already been conducted to agree the staffing establishment and monitoring.
- 3.2. Further work is now required to map all staff (including agency / interim / consultants) against this establishment and ensure that the processes for approval of any changes are clear, robust, and enforced.
- 3.3. Due to the significance of this area of expenditure, it is recommended that an immediate halt is made to all recruitment not yet advertised for the next 2 months (to October 2023). A process will be put in place for a small number of exceptions to be considered e.g., where health and safety or statutory service delivery would be put at risk.

Recommendation 1 – An immediate external recruitment freeze to be put in place, to be reviewed in October 2023 as part of the MTFP Update to Council.

Recommendation 2 – A process is established for exceptions to be considered during this period (see Annex 1).

Recommendation 3 – The budgeted establishment is agreed by October 2023, together with the future process to agree any changes to this and how they would be funded.

- 3.4. The filling of internal vacancies will need to be considered by Directors / Management Board as although they may not incur additional costs overall to the Council, the corporate benefit to the recruiting department will need to be weighed against the loss of staff from another service area who will be unable to recruit a replacement.

Agency / Interims / Consultancy

- 3.5. The use of agency staff etc. is commonplace in local government and has become increasingly necessary due to the shortage of skilled workers available within the workforce, particularly around professional roles. They do, however, come at an additional cost to the Council.
- 3.6. A number of these staff have been in post for lengthy periods and are therefore driving the costs of the services beyond the agreed budgets. It is unclear at present how many of these staff have been appointed in addition to the budgeted establishment, which links to Recommendation 3 above.
- 3.7. It is acknowledged that some staff will be covering vital roles or working on projects with separate funding streams.
- 3.8. It may be possible to bring some of these workers into vacant posts and regularise the position whilst reducing costs.
- 3.9. It is worth noting that there is a risk in this area as some of these staff may have gained employment rights due to the length of their service and these will need to be understood and considered as part of any actions.

Recommendation 4 - A review is needed of all existing staffing outside of the on-payroll workforce to reduce costs and align with the budgeted establishment.

Non- Essential / Discretionary Expenditure

- 3.10. Expenditure is required to ensure the safe and legal delivery of the statutory services which the Council delivers. All other expenditure needs to be reviewed and prioritised to ensure the Council delivers on its statutory Value for Money obligations. Responsibility for this sits with the Council's Section 151 Officer.

- 3.11. The MTFP update report detailed an initial set of budget reductions totalling £1.773m which still left an estimated £1.64m to find.
- 3.12. The work on the 2022-23 outturn has increased this shortfall but has identified budget areas which are traditionally underspent.

Recommendation 5 – The initial proposals set out in the July 2023 MTFP update are implemented and removed from the 2023-24 budget.

Recommendation 6 – the proposed budget reductions set out in paragraph 2.6 above are agreed and implemented.

- 3.13. A Financial Control Panel (FCP) has been established which will review all discretionary expenditure on a service-by-service basis. The membership and Terms of Reference for the Panel are set out in Annex 2.
- 3.14. This will generate further areas of budget reductions which will help reduce the financial deficit. Some proposals arising from this work may have significant service / reputational implications. These will be reported to the Executive Working Group for consideration prior to implementation.
- 3.15. The membership and Terms of Reference for the Executive Working Group are set out in Annex 3.
- 3.16. A review of each service has already been undertaken. The output from this needs to be reviewed and recommendations made by Executive Heads of Service (EHoS) for each service area made regarding the level of savings the proposals will yield and when. Proposals which directly support this Council's financial recovery plan will be prioritised and implemented using the two panels above.

- 3.17. In addition to 3.16, the Financial Control Panel will meet with each EHoS (and their managers where appropriate) by the end of August 2023 to analyse all areas of spend (line by line) and identify proposals for service cost reduction, identifying the implications to residents, staff, other service areas and politically. These options will identify proposals to both meet the in-year service gap and contribute to the Councils useable reserves to meet the requirements of the MTFP. EHoS will be asked to clear diaries where needed and prioritise this essential work. Proposals for cost reduction emanating from this process will be presented to the Executive Working Group.

Recommendation 7 – the service review outcomes be considered and implemented and the immediate line by line cost reduction plan or each service area immediately actioned using the governance process set out above.

4. Proposed Actions – The 6-month Plan

- 4.1. The Council is going to have to focus its time and resources on the delivery of this Financial Recovery Plan over the next 6 months, culminating in agreeing a legally compliant MTFP in February 2024.
- 4.2. It will need to do this whilst recognising the need to deliver statutory services and the obligations to Waverley Borough Council through the joint management arrangements.
- 4.3. It is proposed several workstreams will be established with a Director or Executive Head of Service as sponsor for each. An initial list is provided below which will be developed, together with governance and reporting arrangements, in the next iteration of the Financial Recovery Plan.
- Review of Capital Programme
 - Asset disposals

- Housing Revenue Account
 - Treasury Management
 - Insurance
 - Service reviews / delivery options
 - Policy change options
 - Review of Accounting Policies and Procedures
 - Income generation
 - Partnership working
 - Contracts / procurement
- 4.4. Significant support will be required by the Organisational Development Service to co-ordinate and support the various project workstreams needed to deliver the Financial Recovery Plan. The details of this will be agreed at CMB.
- 4.5. Additional resource will be required to deliver the plan which will be met from the earmarked reserve already agreed.

Recommendation 8 – the above list of Financial Recovery Plan outcomes be agreed, and developed into detailed project plans with agreed scope, timescales and target outcomes.

5. Financial Services Workstream

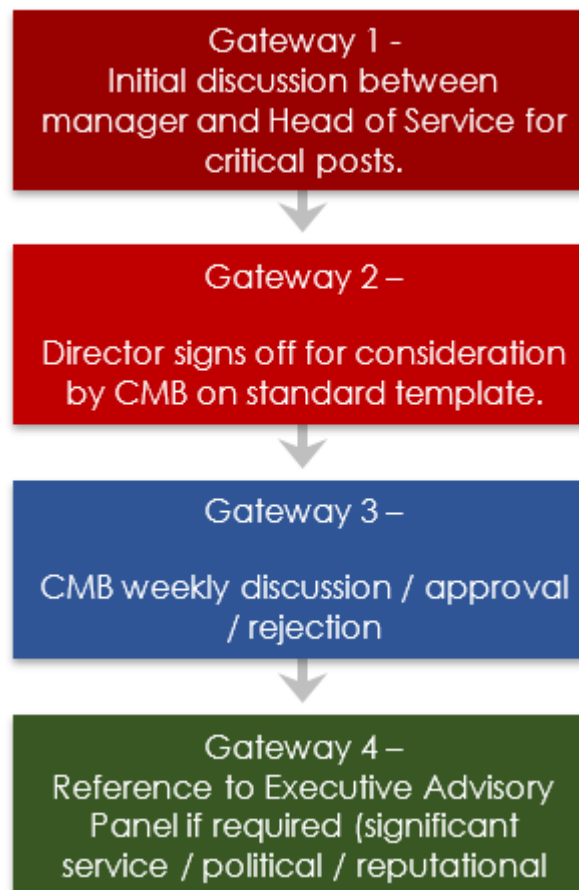
- 5.1. In addition to the work required corporately, significant work is required to improve the financial governance within the Council. The

key areas are listed below and will need to be developed into a resourced and costed project plan.

- Budget monitoring
- Establishment control
- Review of Financial Procedure Rules including approval processes and delegations
- Review of Contract Procedure Rules and procurement strategy
- MTFP / Budget process
- Production of Budget book
- Closedown planning / resourcing
- Audit interaction and Audit Plan
- Recharging
- Balance sheet management, reconciliations, and key controls
- Project Finance - planning, forecasting, management and controls
- Review of team structure and skills

Recommendation 9 – the above list of Financial Services workstreams be further developed by the Section 151 Officer.

Annex 1 – Requests for Exemption from Temporary Recruitment Freeze



Notes:

- 1) The process will use the documentation developed by Waverley Borough Council for Establishment Control
- 2) This process will be reviewed after October 2023 Council and a process agreed for remainder of 2023/24.
- 3) Posts requiring extreme urgency requests can be considered by the Chief Executive / s151 Officer in advance of CMB and decisions recorded at the next meeting.

Annex 2 – Financial Control Panel

Membership

Section 151 Officer

Interim Finance Analyst

Joint Strategic Director (Transformation and Governance)

Joint Executive Head of Organisational Development

Executive Head of Commercial Services

Administrative support

Terms of Reference

- To instigate a line-by-line review of service budgets with EHoS.
- To consider and prioritise requests to move to the next stage of capital projects and their financial implications.
- To receive regular updates on the progress of actions outlined within the Financial Recovery Plan.
- To co-ordinate the communications plan with the Comms team.
- To report key issues to the Executive Working Group as appropriate.

Annex 3 – Financial Recovery Executive Working Group

Membership:

Finance Portfolio Holder

Leader

Deputy Leader

Group Leaders of political groups and/or their nominees

Section 151 Officer and Deputy

Chief Executive

Strategic Director for Transformation & Governance

Terms of Reference

- To receive and comment on regular updates on the council's preparations for the Medium-Term Financial Plan restatement in October and its implementation.
- To provide a sounding board for the Executive and officers on the options that are coming forward to close our projected financial gap.
- To guide wider communication with councillors and beyond.

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Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils

Report to: Council

Date: 30 August 2023

Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report of Director: Transformation & Governance

Author: Jon Formby

Tel: 01483 523499

Email: jon.formby@waverley.gov.uk

Report Status: Open

Appointment of Interim Section 151 Officer

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a S151 Officer, also known as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO – known as Executive Head of Finance), to have responsibility for those arrangements.
- 1.2 Due to the departure of Peter Vickers, the current Executive Head of Service and Section 151 Officer, a replacement appointment is required to ensure that both councils meet their statutory requirements.
- 1.3 The nature of the recruitment market and timescales to appoint to the permanent role and also ensure both councils have the S151 Officer in place mean that both an interim and permanent appointment solution are required.

- 1.4 The search for an interim S151 Officer has been carried out in conjunction with external Executive Search Companies, Penna and Hays.
- 1.5 Interviews and technical assessments were carried out with shortlisted candidates and the successful candidate for the role was identified as Richard Bates, provided from Hays.
- 1.6 Due to the requirement to provide continuity, Richard was appointed to the interim role of Executive Head of Finance on 17 July 2023; however, approval to the S151 element of the role is required from both councils and a formal recommendation is required from the Joint Appointments Committee (JAC).
- 1.7 At its meeting held on 14 August 2023, the JAC recommended unanimously to both councils that Richard Bates be appointed as the Interim Section 151 Officer. Waverley Borough Council will be holding an extraordinary meeting of its full Council on 29 August to consider the JAC's recommendation.

2. Recommendation to Council

The Council is asked to agree:

That Richard Bates be appointed as the Interim Section 151 Officer for Waverley Borough Council and Guildford Borough Council.

3. Reason(s) for Recommendation:

- 3.1. Section 151 of the Local Government Act, 1972 requires that local authorities have in place arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs.
- 3.2. Richard Bates is a qualified Accountant and experienced local authority Chief Financial Officer. He has held the S151 Officer role at Dorset County Council and interim S151 Officer at Mendip District Council (see Appendix 2 – Richard Bates - Summary Curriculum Vitae)

4. Exemption from publication

Yes. Appendix 2.

4.1 The content of Appendix 2 is to be treated as exempt from the Access to Information publication rules because the process for candidate selection will involve the disclosure, or likely disclosure of personal information about the candidate and is therefore exempt from publication by virtue of paragraphs 1 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as follows:

(1) "Information relating to any individual".

(4) "Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or officer-holders under, the authority."

4.2 The content is restricted to the members of both councils.

4.3 It is not anticipated that the exempt information can be expected to be made available for public inspection.

4.4 The decision to maintain the exemption may be challenged by any person at the point at which the Council is invited to pass a resolution to exclude the public from the meeting to consider the exempt information.

5. Purpose of Report

5.1 In the light of the decision of Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils to form a Joint Management Team (JMT), the JAC has considered the formal appointment of the interim S151 Officer as per the role profile attached as Appendix 1.

5.2 Every council must appoint the statutory roles of Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer (i.e. chief financial officer as per Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972), Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer. These are Full Council appointments.

5.3 The JAC's role, as set out in its terms of reference, is:

“Adopting and exercising such of the functions of Guildford Borough Council and Waverley Borough Council (“the councils”) as can be delegated by those councils in respect of the appointment of the councils’ Joint Chief Executive/Head of Paid Service and any Joint Statutory Officer and Director posts as are covered by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended) or any successor regulations.”

5.4 Regarding the statutory office of Section 151 Officer, the JAC undertakes the appointment process and makes a recommendation to both Full Council meetings. At its meeting on 14 August 2023, the JAC considered an application for the interim S151 Officer role. An assessment of Leadership Competency, as per the role profile, was undertaken. An assessment of technical skill was also undertaken by the relevant portfolio holders. Feedback from the technical skill assessment was made available to the JAC for consideration at its meeting. Following their interview with Richard Bates, the JAC unanimously recommended to both councils his appointment to the interim S151 Officer role.

5.5 The final appointment is subject to no material or well-founded objection to the making of an offer of appointment being received by either Leader on behalf of their respective executives. Both Leaders have confirmed that no objections have been received.

6. Strategic Priorities

- 6.1 The Joint Executive Head of Finance plays a pivotal role in the delivery of Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils' aspirations set out in the respective Corporate Plan and Corporate Strategy through the assessment of financial risk, the provision of high-quality financial advice to councillors and to other members of the JMT.

7. Background

- 7.1. The current Section 151 Officer, Peter Vickers leaves Waverley Borough Council on 3 September 2023.
- 7.2. Both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils are required to have a Section 151 Officer in place to fulfil their statutory financial obligations under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 7.3. Recruitment to senior roles on a permanent basis potentially takes significant longer than the time available in the notice period, necessitating both an interim and permanent process of recruitment.
- 7.4. The interim process has been run in conjunction with recruitment agencies Hays and Penna.
- 7.5. Alongside this Penna have undertaken the permanent recruitment campaign and this appointment will be brought back to the JAC in September.

8. Key Risks

- 8.1 Local authorities are required to have a Section 151 Officer in place so that they can fulfil their statutory financial obligations under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The candidate is provided by Hays Specialist Recruitment LTD for the interim assignment on a daily Client Rate of £927.68.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils are required to have a Section 151 Officer to fulfil statutory financial obligations under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 10.2 The final appointment is subject to no material or well-founded objection to the making of an offer of appointment being received by either Leader on behalf of their respective Executives, as required by Part II of Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities Standing Orders (England) Regulations 2001. As mentioned above, no such objection has been received.

11. Human Resource Implications

- 11.1 The Executive Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer is a key role and part of the strategic Joint Management Team at Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 None

13. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 13.1 None

14. Summary of Options

- 14.1 The timescales to go out to recruitment for a permanent role only would have put the Councils at risk of not having a S151 Officer in place before the current incumbent departed.
- 14.2 Interim roles of this level at Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils have successfully been filled in conjunction with Executive Search agencies, most recently for the Executive Head of Legal and Democratic Services/Monitoring Officer and the Executive Head of Planning Services.

- 14.3 Recruitment of an interim S151 Officer allows some overlap with the current incumbent, meets our statutory requirement and also provides a consistent level of Senior Leadership for the Finance Teams at Guildford and Waverley during challenging financial times for the Councils.

15. Conclusion

- 15.1 To ensure continuity and consistency at challenging financial times it is essential for the Finance Service at both councils to have an interim Executive Head of Finance / Section 151 Officer.
- 15.2 Appointment of an interim role is essential to ensure that both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils meet the statutory requirements of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 15.3 The Joint Appointments Committee has recommended unanimously the appointment of Richard Bates as the Interim Section 151 Officer to both Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils.

16. Background Papers

None

17. Appendices

Appendix 1: Executive Head of Finance/Section 151 Job Profile

Appendix 2: Richard Bates – Curriculum Vitae – Summary [EXEMPT]

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Role Title	Joint Executive Head of Finance Reporting to: Joint Strategic Director of Transformation and Governance
Role Purpose	<p>Accountable for efficient operational delivery of Guildford and Waverley council services consistent with the strategic aims and values of both councils.</p> <p>Acting as strong leadership and cultural role models, provide energetic, proactive, inspirational decision making, direction, support and guidance to all internal and external stakeholders including partners, Councillors, staff. This will include working collaboratively across partnerships, services, and Councils, driving the collaboration, harmonised culture and change agendas as set by the Councils.</p> <p>As a key member of the Joint Management Team, this role will make a major contribution to driving service efficiency and quality for the residents of Guildford and Waverley.</p>
Senior Leadership Accountabilities	<p>Accountabilities include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing operational leadership for the functions above. 2. Giving high quality advice and guidance to elected councillors and staff to enable the Councils’ priorities and responsibilities to be progressed. 3. Empowering your managers to be visibly accountable for the operational outcomes and details of their teams, promoting a positive outward facing culture of high performing, customer focused service and facilitating the drive for collaboration and transformational change. 4. Building constructive working relationships with all relevant stakeholders, including staff colleagues, councillors and relevant external parties. 5. Horizon scanning to keep abreast of innovations, economic legislative and social development affecting your service areas

	<p>and developing commercial and business thinking to your services.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Effectively managing and mitigating risks associated with your services including the Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults, Health and Safety, business continuity and the risk of fraud and corruption.7. Promoting equality and inclusion at all levels of service delivery and employment.8. Demonstrating the councils leadership competencies and values.9. Building high performing services that continuously improve.10. Proactively identify opportunities for collaboration and change in accordance with agendas set by the Councils, promoting a culture of collaborative leadership through the wider joint management team, fairly and objectively representing the interests of both councils and the effective working of the organisations.11. Leading on key corporate programmes and projects as required.12. Champion and role model the harmonised organisational culture of the Councils ensuring that the Councils' values are lived.13. Leading the engagement with key strategic stakeholders in your service areas, including those from the statutory, business and voluntary sectors at borough, county and national level.14. Attending, as required, meetings of the Councils, Executives, Committees, Special Interest Groups and external meetings.15. Representing the Councils (and/or ensure that the Council is represented) externally and to promote and present a positive image to partners, representative bodies and other organisations, as necessary.
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<p>Initial Role Specific Accountabilities</p>	<p>This role has shared responsibility for Council budgets</p> <p>This role is the Section 151 Officer and is therefore the Chief Financial Officer with responsibility for the development of the medium-term financial strategy and provision of financial leadership to deliver long-term financial sustainability, optimising the efficient use of resources to support Council priorities. The role provides timely and pragmatic financial advice which is solutions-driven and incorporates a thorough understanding and assessment of risk in accordance with the CIPFA guidance: Role-of-CFO-in-LG 2016.</p> <p>The functions that this role leads are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance and Accounting (General Fund and HRA) • Internal Audit • Procurement • Revenues and Benefits <p>Please note that this is a statutory officer role and as such appointment must be agreed by Guildford and Waverley full Council.</p>
<p>Role Dimensions</p>	<p>Direct Reports <i>(NB Please note that as job titles frequently change, the below represent functions of roles and not job titles)</i></p> <p>TBC</p> <p>Number of staff approximately: Up to 100</p>

Additional Notes:

1. All work performed and duties undertaken must be carried out in accordance with relevant Council and Service policies and procedures, within legislation and with regard to the needs of our customers and the diverse communities we serve.
2. This document sets out the main dimensions of the job it describes. It does not define all individual tasks, which may be expected to change from time to time to meet operational needs.

3. You will be expected to be flexible in your duties and carry out any other duties commensurate with the grade and falling within the general scope of the job, as request by your line manager.
4. This is a politically restricted post. You cannot be elected as a councillor in any local authority whilst employed in this role.
5. The statutory roles of Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer will be held by a member of the Joint Management Team. Deputy roles may be held by other senior managers.

Health and Safety / Risk Management

1. Ensure that all aspects of the Councils' Health and Safety Policies and Procedures are adhered to.
2. Be responsible for identifying and managing all risks associated with the job role through effective application of internal controls and risk assessments to support the achievement of corporate and service objectives.
3. Be available to assist in Emergency / Disaster Recovery situations.
4. Participate in the Councils' out of hours rota.
5. Adhere to the relevant Councils' constitution.
6. Champion Safeguarding policy and practice.

Contacts and Relationships

In this post, you will have significant contact with Councillors and senior officers of the Council. The Councils' Code of Conduct will apply.

Head of Service Person Specification

(please note the requirements below are all essential)

Qualifications

1. Educated to at least degree level or equivalent experience

2. Evidence of commitment to professional development (CPD)
3. As this role is the Section 151 Officer, the post-holder must hold appropriate accountancy qualifications and supporting experience to be able to fulfil the role of Chief Financial Officer in accordance with CIPFA guidance.

Experience

1. Significant post-qualification experience of strategic financial management, accounting and governance, preferably in a local government setting
2. In depth knowledge of local government financial management and accounting including the legal and regulatory framework
3. Experience leading across different specialisms with staff leadership and budgetary responsibility.
4. Experience of procurement, contract management and service commissioning.
5. Experience of developing business cases and projects to work collaboratively, overseeing implementation and evaluating success.
6. Experience of achieving positive outcomes when handling complex employment relationships issues including change programmes, culture development and case management
7. Proven track record of working successfully in a public sector environment with experience in their Service area.

Knowledge

1. Highly numerate and commercially aware, recognising the importance of value for money in all Council activity
2. Detailed understanding of strategic operational delivery including specific operational knowledge in Service area.

3. Knowledge of leadership models, styles and behaviours including an ability to engage, motivate and coach/mentor others to deliver.
4. Knowledge of facilitating business transformation based on systems thinking and use of technology.
5. An understanding of, and a commitment to, addressing equality and inclusion issues.

Skills and Abilities

1. Able to maintain effective relationships with Councillors.
2. A strong corporate player, able to align with the Councils' values, work collaboratively and develop shared approaches with colleagues across both councils, representing the interests of both Councils fairly and objectively.
3. An enabler, with the ability to manage a wide range of complex issues and agendas at the same time and drive change through influence and diplomacy.
4. Creative and imaginative. Able to see new approaches with an ability to communicate the vision, overcoming obstacles and showing that ambitious goals can be achieved.
5. Able to provide a clear and articulate overview of complex issues and provide sound professional and reliable advice in an accessible and non-technical manner.
6. Commercially aware, recognising the importance of value for money in all Council activity.
7. Able to demonstrate the leadership competencies including being able to lead, motivate and inspire diverse teams of staff, build capacity and promote a highly engaged, high performing staff team who can adapt to change.
8. Able to work collaboratively with other service areas and external organisations and build alliances and long and short-term partnerships.

9. Excellent communication skills and ability to positively enhance the reputation of the Councils.
10. Ability to work at pace, while managing a complex workload and maintaining your own resilience.

Leadership Competencies

Strategic Thinking:

- Sees the bigger picture
- Predicts future risks and opportunities
- Communicates overall direction
- Adapts to changing circumstances
- Maintains positivity in difficult times
- Supports organisational decisions
- Is comfortable with ambiguity
- Drives innovation and transformation
- Turns vision into tangible plans
- Brings the outside in to the organisation
- Takes time for own professional development
- Works with uncertainty

Delivery Through People

- Engages and motivates people
- Listens and responds appropriately
- Builds relationships with key stakeholders
- Works in partnership within and across Councils
- Builds effective working relationships
- Encourages creativity
- Communicates clearly and appropriately
- Is a positive role model
- Coaches and supports
- Celebrates, encourages and learns from different views and experiences
- Is politically astute
- Negotiates and influences

Excellence for Customers

- Provides good value for money
- Achieves high quality outcomes / results
- Is personally effective
- Focuses on customer service
- Manages conflicting priorities
- Embraces technology
- Manages risk
- Manages peaks and troughs of demand
- Focuses on community and local economy
- Takes a 'digital first' approach
- Takes a learning approach to continuously improve
- Champions collaboration

Governance

- Follows policies, processes, procedures and standards
- Is open, honest, and transparent
- Acts with integrity
- Has strong ethical compass
- Ensures fairness in all dealings
- Builds trust
- Takes accountability and ownership of issues
- Bases decisions on evidence and research
- Is consistent with decision making
- Understands the community and environmental impact of decisions
- Demonstrates financial responsibility

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