

## Executive

\* Councillor Julia McShane (Chairperson)

\* Councillor Tom Hunt (Vice-Chair)

\* Councillor Angela Goodwin

\* Councillor George Potter

\* Councillor Catherine Houston

Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith

\* Councillor Richard Lucas

\* Councillor Fiona White

\* Councillor Carla Morson

\*Present

### **EX13 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

Councillor Merel Rehorst-Smith was in remote attendance.

### **EX14 Local Code of Conduct - Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

Councillor Potter declared a non-pecuniary interest against Item 5 as the Riverside SANG was part located in the ward he represented. Councillor Potter confirmed this would not affect his objectivity in determining the matter.

### **EX15 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2024 were confirmed as correct. The Chairman signed the minutes.

### **EX16 Leader's Announcements**

The Guildford Design Awards were held every two years in partnership with Guildford Borough Council. An exhibition of the winning projects from the 2023 Guildford Design Awards would be at White Lion Walk on:

- Saturday 22 June from 9am to 6pm
- Sunday 23 June from 11am to 5pm

Discover the creativity and innovation exhibited by the winners and be inspired by the projects that will shape our future heritage. [For more details visit the Guildford Society website.](#)

Guildford Borough Council recently received Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) capital grant funding and £200K was available to assist local rural enterprises this financial year.

Anyone with a project that might qualify, was encouraged to get in touch with [Surrey County Council rural prosperity](http://www.surreycc.co.uk/ruralprosperity). ([www.surreycc.co.uk/ruralprosperity](http://www.surreycc.co.uk/ruralprosperity)). Qualifying projects could include: local economy development, local rural green tourism, farm diversification, circular economy, creation of multi-functional rural business hubs, community businesses, cooperatives, or social enterprises such as village shops and cafes.

The Guildford Craft Festival 2024 was taking place on 13 to 15 June and 20 to 22 June 2024. It would be open weekdays from 10am to 5pm and 9am to 5:30pm on Saturdays. It offered an opportunity for local visitors and tourists to purchase inspiration crafts and design-led gifts.

The next antiques and brocante market would take place on 23 June 2024 on Guildford High Street. It was open from 9.30am to 4pm. With more than 50 stalls to choose from, whether a collector, interested in interiors, or looking for unusual 'quirky' finds this market had lots on offer.

#### **EX17 Riverside - Nature Reserve SANG improvement**

The Executive considered a report that sought approval to draw down ringfenced SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) funding from developer contribution reserves to carry out a capital project for replacement and improvement of the access infrastructure at Riverside Nature Reserve and Parsonage Water Meadows, and to create additional staff resource of one Project Manager Post to deliver the project. In particular, a new boardwalk was required to make the site safely accessible to the public. The site lay along the Wey Navigation running from Burpham to Bellfields.

Councillor Potter had declared a non-pecuniary interest against Item 5 as the Riverside SANG was part located in the ward he represented. Councillor Potter confirmed this would not affect his objectivity in determining the matter.

The Executive noted the importance of SANG in the borough which enabled a more even spread of new development. Much land locally was covered by the Thames Heath Basin Special Protection Area, without SANG, development would be constrained only to certain areas. SANG needed to be local to new developments to encourage residents in those developments to spend recreational time in the SANG rather than on the protected heathland areas. With more development proposed there would be a search for more SANG. Due to its location, the Riverside SANG was an asset accessible to new residents and town centre residents alike.

The new boardwalk would be replaced with long-lasting recycled plastic.

The Executive heard that an access improvement audit had been conducted and consequently there would be increased and improved signage and seating. The site was also flat which made it more accessible to those with mobility scooters, wheelchairs etc. Officers would follow up with the Guildford Access Group to see if any further improvements could be made. The additional staff resource would be able to undertake more consultation and engagement with residents, partners and stakeholders.

The Boardwalk would not be replaced as it was currently positioned. Previously, Riverside had experienced some anti-social behaviour and the new layout would be aimed to 'design out' the likelihood of this in future and to make the site safer and more inviting.

Access for firefighting had been an historical issue and the Fire Service had recently attended to walk the site and would draw up a plan to advise officers on how improvements could be made with particular emphasis on access via low bridges and the A3.

It was hoped a circular walk could be created that could be in use all year round.

It was noted that when the Weyside Urban Village site became populated the Riverside Nature Reserve would be extended up to Clay Lane providing a two mile corridor and a four mile round trip walk.

The site was also important to Guildford's biodiversity and wildlife. The funding would preserve and protect some important fens and wetlands for the next few decades at least.

It was proposed that the investment of the site would create an exemplar of public open spaces. Consequently, the Executive,

**RESOLVED:**

That this Executive recommends to full Council meeting on 23 July 2024 the approval of:

- 1 Capital expenditure of £1,133,500 from existing development contributions to improve SANG capacity and improvement of the SANG access infrastructure at Riverside Nature Reserve and Parsonage Water Meadows, and
- 2 an additional staff resource of one Project Manager Post for project delivery.

Reason(s):

1. Officers consider the project proposal the most efficient option to maintain SANG capacity to mitigate the recreational pressure resulting from the developments the SANG contributions have been collected from.
2. The project will deliver necessary works to achieve health and safety compliance under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957.
3. The delivery of the project will provide added benefits to the Council by demonstrating compliance with the public duties for biodiversity under the Environment Act 2021 and the duties under the Equality Act 2010.

### **EX18 Proposed Changes to the Officer Scheme of Delegation**

Council decision making could be delegated to officers through a written Officer Scheme of Delegation which clearly set out the responsibilities of officers and any limitations on their powers. This document was publicly available as a part of the Constitution.

Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and Waverley Borough Council (WBC) each had a different Officer Scheme of Delegation which was leading to a lack of clarity for members of the Joint Management Team (JMT), as they worked across both Councils experiencing differing decision levels across their services on a day to day basis.

The Executive considered a report recommending that the delegation of Executive functions be set out in the revised Joint Officer Scheme of Delegation and Proper Officer Scheme. In some respects, there were proposed changes within the revised Scheme that brought some decisions back to the Executive itself. The revised draft documents were set out in the appendices to the report.

Members of the Joint Constitutions Review Group (JCRG) had reviewed drafts of the revised Scheme at its meetings held on 25 April 2024 and 29 May 2024. This group was comprised of certain Executive members, back bench members and the appropriate officers. This matter was being considered as a part of a larger review of both councils' governance documentation. All members of the JMT had been consulted.

The Executive welcomed the careful and diligent review that was being undertaken of GBC's Constitutional documents. It was important that delegations were appropriate, transparent and accountable. The proposals were in line with the recommended improvements to governance as set out in the SOLACE report, which was also welcomed.

It was noted that the revised scheme and associated papers would be considered by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee on the 01 July. An additional recommendation in that regard was set out in the Supplementary Information Sheet that would authorise the Monitoring Officer to act on any proposals received at that meeting.

The amendment to the wording set out in paragraph 2.6.5 on page 97 of the agenda pack that now referred to the disposal of *non-housing* land and buildings up to 0.2h was welcomed in reflection of the recent debate concerning the sale of the Blackwell Farm Ransom Strip.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

1. That the delegation of Executive functions set out in the revised Joint Officer Scheme of Delegation and Proper Officer Scheme (Appendices 1 and 3) be approved; and
2. that the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader, and Portfolio Holder, be authorised to include any changes to the Scheme of Delegation in respect of Executive functions recommended by the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee at its special meeting on 1 July 2024.

Reason(s):

1. An officer scheme of delegation and proper officer scheme which is materially the same for both Councils, whilst being owned by each Council in respect of their services, will help to promote more efficient joint working and will support the transformation programme by aligning officer decision making across both Councils.
2. The recommended changes will improve the governance procedures for each Council and will ensure that there is greater transparency over decision making.
3. The reductions in financial limits will ensure that key decisions are made by the Executive, thereby promoting accountability and transparency.
4. Aligning officer delegations into a joint scheme, supports the Councils Collaborative and Transformation programme and provides clarity for those officers employed to provide a joint service across both Councils.

**EX19 G-Live Appointment of the future operator**

The Council had entered into a 10-year G Live Operator Agreement with HQ Theatres Guildford Limited and QDOS Entertainment PLC (HQT) on 12 August 2011. Subsequently, Trafalgar Entertainment had acquired HQ Theatres. With a 3-year extension due to the pandemic, that contract would run until 30 September 2024. The council had also granted a lease of the G Live premises to HQT (now, Trafalgar) for a period of 10 years at a peppercorn rent. This lease was also extended until 30 September 2024. As the contracts had been extended to maximum length under the original procurement the contract had to be re-tendered.

The Executive considered a report that summarised the outcome of the competitive tender process with recommendations to appoint the successful operator and length of term of the new contract.

There was additional informal in regard to sustainability targets over the period of the proposed new contract set out in the Supplementary Information Sheet which had been provided for the Executive at the request of the Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had previously reviewed the report. The Leader thanked the Chairman and the members of that Committee.

The Executive agreed it would not discuss the restricted material set out in the appendix to the report.

The Lead Councillor for Commercial Services introduced the report and explained that the venue had been in operation for just 13 years and when the 2011 contract was agreed its future success was unknown. At that point in time the council felt it was appropriate to subsidise the contract, award a peppercorn rent and take just a small share of the profit. Today, G Live was a highly successful venue with national and international acts drawing audiences from a wide area and it brought £4m to the local economy annually. The procurement of the new contract had been more than a commercial exercise because of the way in which the venue was a part of the Guildford community. The lead councillor thanked all of those involved in the negotiations, procurement and scrutiny of the process to date, and those who had tendered for the contract.

The new contract proposal was an all-round financial gain for the council in that there would no longer be a subsidy to be paid and a rental income would be received of £240,000 per annum resulting in a positive financial saving of over £0.5m per annum.

It was noted the targets set out in the Supplementary Information Sheet should read 2025 and not 2024.

The Executive welcomed the report and the recommendations. There was confidence given the new contract would be awarded to the same team that had built the venue over the previous years and which was now proposing a capital investment to develop the venue further and to continue to improve the visitor experience. It was particularly noted and welcomed that the contractor would operate sustainably and match the council's own commitment to reach zero-carbon by 2030. The creative learning experience would also be an area of focus under the new contract benefitting local people with opportunities for personal development.

Overall, the Executive concluded that the new contract was a good outcome for the venue, the council and the residents of Guildford. Consequently, the Executive,

RESOLVED:

That the Executive:

1. approved the appointment of Trafalgar Entertainment Group as the operators of G Live for a 25-year contract; and
2. delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Finance, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Commercial Services, to agree and enter into all such contracts and other legal agreements as may be necessary to implement this award, in compliance with the Procurement Procedure Rules where applicable.

Reason(s):

The contract has been competitively tendered through the GBC procurement portal and Trafalgar Entertainment Group have proven to be the most competitive and best placed to run G Live going forward.

#### **EX20 Executive Appointment to Outside Bodies: Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board**

The Council appointed councillors to a number of external organisations for which they undertook a range of governance or advisory roles. Appointment to the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board ("JSP") was not included in the last round of appointments to external organisations in 2023 and it was proposed this anomaly be rectified. Guildford Borough Council appointed

to outside bodies following the local elections and so the appointment would be in place until May 2027.

The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) Board acted as an advisory body for local planning authorities affected by the SPA of which Guildford was one. Guildford Borough Council was one of a number of planning authorities that were full members and had full voting rights at meetings of the JSP Board.

There was a vacancy for one appointee and a deputy.

This was a Planning-focused appointment and one that required a senior representative.

The Executive,

RESOLVED:

The appointment of the Portfolio Holder for Planning to the Thames Basin Heaths Joint Strategic Partnership Board and the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Environment as deputy appointee until the next review of appointments to external organisations in 2027.

Reason(s):

It was important that the council had an appointee to the JSP to represent the borough.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning was the correct councillor to appoint to the JSP for reasons of relevance, and seniority to work with partner agencies to maintain the long-term protection of the SPA.

The meeting finished at 6.46 pm

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman