

PLACE MAKING AND INNOVATION EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

8 April 2019

Councillor Nils Christiansen (Chairman)

* Councillor Angela Goodwin (Vice-Chairman) In the Chair

Councillor David Elms	* Councillor Julia McShane
Councillor Andrew Gomm	Councillor Dennis Paul
* Councillor Christian Holliday	* Councillor Mike Piper
Councillor Mike Hurdle	* Councillor David Quelch
Councillor Jennifer Jordan	Councillor Jenny Wicks

* Present

Councillors Matt Furniss and Caroline Reeves were also in attendance.

BEI32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nils Christiansen, David Elms, Andrew Gomm, Mike Hurdle, Jennifer Jordan and Jenny Wicks. Councillor Tony Rooth was present as a substitute for Councillor Nils Christiansen.

BEI33 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

BEI34 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board held on 18 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

BEI35 GUILDFORD PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

A report updating the Executive Advisory Board on the next phase of the Guildford public realm improvement project prior to submission to the Executive for approval was introduced by the Lead Councillor for Infrastructure and Governance. The Project Manager presented the report and an accompanying presentation.

The report addressed the second phase of the improvement project to: reconnect the High Street to the town centre's cultural and heritage quarter, enhance the town centre's character and improve visitors' experience within a distinctive conservation area.

The first phase, delivered in 2018, was the Tunsgate pedestrianisation scheme. This utilised high quality materials to: compliment the High Street's granite setts and heritage, introduce vehicle restrictions and provide shared level carriageway and landscaping.

The second phase of the project would deliver, via consultation, the following:

1. Chapel Street - enhancement of the current surface to ensure it met appropriate disability accessibility standards for all whilst continuing to reflect the town centre's conservation heritage.
2. Swan Lane – upgrading of the pedestrianised carriageway with materials that preserve the town centre's conservation heritage.

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3. Castle Street – introduction of better traffic controls, signage and physical interventions to address traffic management issues and provide an improved link to the castle grounds.
4. Upgrade existing vehicle gates and CCTV – replacement of existing vehicle barriers and introduction of new vehicle restrictions where necessary and CCTV on Chapel street.
5. Signage – extension of the wayfinding signage to enhance the connectivity across the historic centre and to promote retailers and the cultural offering near the town centre.

The creation of a more pedestrian-friendly environment and reduction of vehicular dominance would assist with creating a safer place for visitors and add to the character of the town. These improvements would ensure that the visitors' experience was positive and that Guildford's town centre remained a popular destination through its attractive historic public realm.

To deliver phase 2, a transfer of the remaining £965,000 from the provisional budget to the approved budget and the £260,000 allocated for high street protection was required.

The presentation covered the purpose of the improvement project; the town quarters and character areas; connecting the heritage hub; Tunsgate; the approach, materials, challenges and opportunities associated with Chapel and Castle Streets; improving town centre vehicular gates and CCTV; programme of works; costs; and tasks and next steps.

The EAB was advised that the Council had been approached by retailers wishing to make financial contributions to the improvements works. The original granite setts in Chapel Street would be reused. There were 5 million visitors to the town each year and it was felt that the improvements would be a boost to the local economy and retail success and would improve accessibility and wayfinding. Consultees would include residents, amenity groups, access groups, businesses and statutory consultees with whom initial concept designs would be shared. The programme aimed for completion in November 2019 to avoid disruption to Christmas trade, however, if it was felt that this could not be achieved, the work would be postponed until the New Year. Issues associated with parking and food delivery drivers / cyclists in the Chapel Street area had been raised by businesses and residents.

Honorary Alderman Mr Gordon Bridger attended the meeting and spoke in favour of the improvement project and requested that Holy Trinity Amenity Group and the Guildford Society be included in the related consultation exercise.

The following points arose from related questions and discussion:

- The proposed public realm improvements were welcomed and should feature some continuity in materials.
- Improvements to accessibility were also welcomed, particularly in Chapel Street which was not currently disability compliant owing to changes in levels which would be addressed by the scheme.
- The public should be made aware of any related landscaping proposals from the outset.
- Although contributions from traders were anticipated, some concerns regarding the cost of implementing and maintaining the project remained.
- Surrey County Council would contribute to the scheme by providing advice and technical support.
- Every effort should be made to minimise disruption to local traders during the works although increased trade was likely to result following completion.

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- Highway measures to reduce the negative impact of parking and food deliveries were sought.
- Associated consultation should be widespread and include the public, visitors and relevant local amenity groups and societies. Consultation material should be shared with councillors to widen the audience.
- The possibility of developing a shopping/retail/tourism trail/wayfinding app should be considered.

The report sought the EAB's views on whether the current wider approach to include Swan Lane and improve the High Street vehicular gates within the scope of the project would ensure better accessibility and safeguard the town centre heritage and security. The Chairman confirmed the EAB's support for the improvement project including Swan Lane and High Street vehicular gates improvement.

BEI36 DRAFT GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE VIEWS STUDY

The Lead Councillor for Infrastructure and Governance introduced the draft Guildford Town Centre Views Study and covering briefing note which advised the Executive Advisory Board of the emerging views study and sought its comments regarding this draft work. The Design and Conservation Team Leader presented the study and delivered an explanatory presentation.

The EAB was advised that Land Use Consultants had been appointed by the Council to produce a study in respect of Guildford town centre identifying views or viewing places that helped to promote a better understanding of Guildford, how it had developed and its relationship with the countryside beyond. The study was also intended to promote recognition of particularly important views of local historic assets that assisted appreciation of the development of the town and demonstrated how proposals for taller buildings would impact on them.

Section 1 of the document set out the context and purpose of the study, Section 2 provided a commentary on the historical development of Guildford and its legacy landmark buildings, Section 3 explored the relationship between Guildford and its landscape setting, Section 4 listed historic assets, landmarks and related views, and Section 5 set out the viewpoint selection process. The figures showed the study area, the legacy landmarks, and key views of the river corridor, town centre approaches and town centre whilst the appendices set out relevant planning policies, the historic development of Guildford from 500 AD, and special characteristics and qualities of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The study included a long list of the selected views and viewing places highlighting those 15 key views which had been scoped in following analysis to reflect their importance in retaining the character of Guildford and the factors that had made it special. The key views in the river corridor were Dapdune Wharf looking south and Wey-South Path at Shalford Park looking north, those in the town centre approaches were Stoke Park looking south-west, Pewley Hill looking north-west, St Catherine's Hill looking north, Hog's Back looking north-east and Farnham Road looking east, and those in the town centre were Sydenham Road / Bright Hill looking north, High Street looking west, Quarry Street looking north, Castle Motte looking north-west, Old Town Bridge looking east, Old Town Bridge looking west, The Mount looking east and Stag Hill looking south-east. Guidance in respect of managing change in relation to each key view was provided. Seasonal differences to the key views were taken into account. The document would be used as the evidence base for officers to produce a views and height supplementary planning document (SPD).

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The following points arose from related discussion and questions:

- The study was good, comprehensive and supported.
- The SPD to follow the study would assist the Council to anticipate the impact of future development in Guildford, particularly that involving tall buildings.
- The proposed station development was outlined on the photographs of Stag Hill, looking south-east to enable it to be visualised. To make this clearer, it was suggested that the development be blocked in on the photographs to show its actual impact.
- Although good views of the town centre could be seen from the tea terrace of the House of Fraser store in the High Street, this site had not satisfied the criteria for selection as a key view.
- As most of the views were seen from high or level viewpoints, it was suggested that consideration be given to including views seen from lower positions looking up to give a different perspective.
- Consideration should be given to including some of the photographs of the views in the displays in the Millmead House reception area.
- Further SPDs, including those relating to the Strategic Development Framework and Sustainability, were also being prepared.

In summary, the Chairman confirmed the EAB's support for the study and following SPD.

BEI37 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The latest version of the Executive Forward Plan was noted.

BEI38 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

In noting the work programme, the Board acknowledged that it may change as a result of the forthcoming Borough Election.

BEI39 PROGRESS WITH ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE EAB

The progress with items previously considered by the EAB was noted.

The meeting finished at 8.20 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date