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Contact Officer:

John Armstrong, Democratic Services Manager.
Tel: 01483 444102

14 October 2019

Dear Councillor

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** to be held in the Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on **TUESDAY, 22 OCTOBER 2019** at 7.00 pm.

Yours faithfully

James Whiteman
Managing Director

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Chairman:

Councillor Caroline Reeves

(Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for the Environment & Sustainability across the borough, Transformation, Sustainable Transport, Economic Development, and Governance))

Vice-Chairman:

Councillor Fiona White

(Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Personal Health, Safety and Wellbeing)

Councillor Joss Bigmore, (Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Service)

Councillor Angela Goodwin, (Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability)

Councillor David Goodwin, (Lead Councillor for Waste, Licensing, and Parking)

Councillor Jan Harwood, (Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration and housing delivery)

Councillor Julia McShane, (Lead Councillor for Community Health, Support and Wellbeing)

Councillor John Rigg, (Lead Councillor for Major Projects)

Councillor Pauline Searle, (Lead Councillor for Countryside, Rural Life, and the Arts)

Councillor James Steel, (Lead Councillor for Tourism, Leisure, and Sport)

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 Committee Services.

QUORUM 3

THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vision – for the borough

For Guildford to be a town and rural borough that is the most desirable place to live, work and visit in South East England. A centre for education, healthcare, innovative cutting-edge businesses, high quality retail and wellbeing. A county town set in a vibrant rural environment, which balances the needs of urban and rural communities alike. Known for our outstanding urban planning and design, and with infrastructure that will properly cope with our needs.

Three fundamental themes and nine strategic priorities that support our vision:

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Place-making | Delivering the Guildford Borough Local Plan and providing the range of housing that people need, particularly affordable homes |
| | Making travel in Guildford and across the borough easier |
| | Regenerating and improving Guildford town centre and other urban areas |
| Community | Supporting older, more vulnerable and less advantaged people in our community |
| | Protecting our environment |
| | Enhancing sporting, cultural, community, and recreational facilities |
| Innovation | Encouraging sustainable and proportionate economic growth to help provide the prosperity and employment that people need |
| | Creating smart places infrastructure across Guildford |
| | Using innovation, technology and new ways of working to improve value for money and efficiency in Council services |

Values for our residents

- We will strive to be the best Council.
- We will deliver quality and value for money services.
- We will help the vulnerable members of our community.
- We will be open and accountable.
- We will deliver improvements and enable change across the borough.

AGENDA

ITEM NO.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

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 1 - 6)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 24 September 2019.

4 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5 E-PETITION: NEW PARKING RESTRICTIONS AT KINGSTON MEADOWS CAR PARK, EAST HORSLEY (Pages 7 - 20)

6 E-PETITION: NEW PARKING RESTRICTIONS AT SUTHERLAND MEMORIAL PARK CAR PARK, BURPHAM (Pages 21 - 28)

7 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2018-19 (Pages 29 - 44)

8 *SURREY HILLS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2025 (Pages 45 - 88)

9 *REPLACEMENT OF DIAL A RIDE MINI BUSES (Pages 89 - 92)

10 *RODBORO BUILDINGS – ELECTRIC THEATRE THROUGH ROAD AND PARKING (Pages 93 - 102)

Key Decisions:

Any item on this agenda that is marked with an asterisk is a key decision. The Council's Constitution defines a key decision as an executive decision which is likely to result in expenditure or savings of at least £200,000 or which is likely to have a significant impact on two or more wards within the Borough.

Under Regulation 9 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, whenever the Executive intends to take a key decision, a document setting out prescribed information about the key decision including:

- the date on which it is to be made,
- details of the decision makers,
- a list of the documents to be submitted to the Executive in relation to the matter,
- how copies of such documents may be obtained

must be available for inspection by the public at the Council offices and on the Council's website at least 28 clear days before the key decision is to be made. The relevant notice in respect of the key decisions to be taken at this meeting was published as part of the Forward Plan on 24 September 2019.

EXECUTIVE

Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)

* Councillor Fiona White (Vice-Chairman) [in the chair]

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore | * Councillor Julia McShane |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | * Councillor John Rigg |
| * Councillor David Goodwin | Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor Jan Harwood | * Councillor James Steel |

*Present

Councillors Angela Gunning, Ramsey Nagaty, Susan Parker and Patrick Sheard were also in attendance.

EX30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of the Chairman, Councillor Caroline Reeves, and Councillor Pauline Searle.

EX31 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

EX32 MINUTES

The Executive approved, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2019. The Vice-Chairman, as the person presiding at the meeting, signed the minutes.

EX33 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

On behalf of the Leader, the Deputy Leader set out the revised portfolio responsibilities of lead councillors as follows:

Cllr Caroline Reeves, Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for the Environment and Sustainability across the borough, Transformation, Sustainable Transport, Economic Development and Governance.

Cllr Fiona White, Deputy Leader of the Council, Lead Councillor for Personal Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

Cllr Joss Bigmore, Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, Customer Services.

Cllr Angela Goodwin, Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability

Cllr David Goodwin, Lead Councillor for Waste, Licensing and Parking

Cllr Jan Harwood, Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration and Housing Delivery

Cllr Julia McShane, Lead Councillor for Community Health, Support and Wellbeing

Cllr John Rigg, Lead Councillor for Major Projects

Cllr Pauline Searle, Lead Councillor for Countryside, Rural life, and the Arts

Cllr James Steel, Lead Councillor for Tourism, Leisure and Sport

EX34 GUILDFORD MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT - UPDATE

The Project Manager and Director of Environment were in attendance.

The Lead Councillor for Tourism, Leisure and Sport introduced the report setting out the developments for the project since it was last considered by the Executive in March.

Whilst it was noted that the project was exciting for the town and had great vision, concern was expressed over the funding commitment being asked of Council to underwrite a budget shortfall from the General Fund should external fundraising efforts prove insufficient. It was proposed that fundraising for the project should be closely monitored to ensure all effort was made to prevent such a shortfall and, if necessary, to review the scope of the project as necessary. It was acknowledged that external funding was more difficult to obtain in the current climate than it had been in the past.

The Director of Environment informed the meeting that, to date, Executive had authorised funding of £1.6 million that would move the project to RIBA Stage 4 and was scheduled to take the project up to 2021. During this period, fundraising efforts would commence including the submission of an expression of interest for the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) bid for £4 million the result of which would be known by March 2020. A further contribution would come from the income raised by the disposal of Castle Cottage and 39 Castle Street. The Executive would be kept informed of progress.

Having considered the report, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the revised scope of the project be approved.
- (2) That the Funding Strategy and appointment of fundraisers to implement the strategy, be approved.
- (3) That the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Lead Councillor, be authorised to adopt policies required for the Museum Accreditation.
- (4) That support for the applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and other funding bodies as they arise, be confirmed.
- (5) That the Director of Environment be authorised to prepare an asset disposal strategy for Castle Cottage and 39 Castle Street (Victorian School Room) and to ring-fence the capital receipts from the disposal to pay for the museum redevelopment.
- (6) That the establishment of a registered charity to facilitate fundraising and receive donations from Trusts and other funders, be approved.

The Executive further

RECOMMEND:

- (1) That a capital supplementary estimate of £11.8million to be funded by external grants and contributions from NLHF and other private trusts and donors as per the funding strategy, be approved.
- (2) That the Council agrees to underwrite the non-NLHF fundraising target of £7.8million and notes the risks associated with doing this as set out in paragraph 8.16 of the report submitted to the Executive, in particular to agree that if there is a shortfall in external funding then the Council will need to fund it from general fund borrowing and find additional service savings in order to fund the borrowing costs.

Reason:

To inform the Executive of the work undertaken since March 2019, enable the museum to gain re-accreditation and explain the next steps with regards to fund raising, architectural and technical designs, audience development programme and Planning.

EX35 STOKE PARK MASTERPLAN: A STRATEGY FOR DELIVERY

The Parks and Landscape Manager and Parks Development Officer were in attendance.

The Chairman and Deputy Leader of the council spoke to the report in the absence of the lead councillor.

The meeting heard how important Stoke Park was to the town and how it supported a wide variety of recreational and wellbeing activities. It had received the Green Flag Award for the past ten years. Looking to the future, a diversity of new uses were being proposed whilst securing protection and preservation of the park because of its value as a green space. It was noted that although the costs proposed in the report were significant, it was important to ensure that the resources were available to produce a plan for such an important asset.

The Executive agreed the costs weighed well against the value the park provides.

Accordingly, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the proposed design brief for the Stoke Park masterplan be approved.
- (2) That the strategy for delivery be approved
- (3) That a general fund supplementary revenue estimate of £380,000 for the purpose of funding professional fees to provide the necessary technical expertise and officer resource to deliver the Stoke Park masterplan be approved and funded as follows:
 - £194,000 from the Masterplan Reserve and
 - £186,000 from the New Homes Bonus Reserve
- (4) That the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Countryside, Rural Life and the Arts, be authorised to take all necessary steps to produce the Stoke Park masterplan for public consultation.

Reason:

To enable the delivery of the Stoke Park masterplan to be resourced and progressed.

EX36 GUILDFORD TOWN CENTRE VIEWS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Director of Planning and Regeneration was in attendance.

The Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration and Housing Delivery introduced the report.

It was explained that this SPD would always be developing. It was described as a 'living' document, but that the version presented was most appropriate for the present. The standard of the work involved in producing the SPD was praised. The value of the SPD had been recognised recently in an important planning appeal case. The new lead councillor for Major Projects welcomed the document as a flexible tool to support planning decision-making.

Non-Executive member comments had suggested the document might have shown more emphasis on the town's green surroundings and that there might have been an earlier process for consultation. The meeting was informed that the process for consultation of the SPD was set out in the report and included consideration by the Place Making and Innovation Executive Advisory Board on two occasions and had been subject to a four-week public consultation. Reference was also drawn to where green space features in the SPD.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Guildford Town Centre Views Supplementary Planning Document, as set out as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be adopted as a Local Development Document.
- (2) That the Director of Planning and Regeneration be authorised, in consultation with the appropriate Lead Councillor, to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the adopted Supplementary Planning Document as she may deem necessary.

Reasons:

- To enable the adoption of the SPD as a Local Development Document and will add weight to this guidance as a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications.
- To allow for minor modifications to the SPD should they be necessary prior to publication.

EX37 REVIEW OF JOINT ENFORCEMENT TEAM

The Waste, Parking and Fleet Services Manager and Director of Environment were in attendance.

The Chair and the Deputy Lead Councillor as lead councillor for Personal Health, Safety and Wellbeing introduced the report.

Setting up the Joint Enforcement Team (JET) was described as a credit to the previous administration and it was praised for its work.

There were some concerns raised during non-Executive member questions regarding business waste. Officers were unaware of the issues raised but asked for further information to be provided outside of the meeting.

The Executive

RESOLVED: That the Joint Enforcement Team be made permanent and that opportunities be explored to expand the team as part of the Future Guildford work programme.

Reason:

To continue the work of the JET and seek to expand capacity within the Future Guildford programme to address enforcement issues and other anti-social behaviour the Council considers is important to residents.

EX38 TIMETABLE OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2020-21

The Executive considered a suggested timetable of Council and committee meetings for the 2020-21 municipal year and

RECOMMEND: That the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2020-21 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.

Reason:

To assist with the preparation of individual committee work programmes.

EX39 SURREY LEADER'S GROUP - NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

As no nominations in respect of the appointments had been received, the Executive agreed that no nominations be submitted.

EX40 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Executive

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the business referred to in Minute EX41 below on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

EX41 ASH ROAD BRIDGE - FUNDING REPORT

The Director of Planning and Regeneration, the Director of Finance and the Project Manager for Major Projects were in attendance.

The Lead Councillor of Finance and Assets, Customer Services introduced the report.

The Executive considered a report concerning the options open to the Council with regard to funding proposals to deliver a new road and road bridge over the railway line at Ash to allow the level crossing to be closed and be replaced with a footbridge suitable for all users.

Having considered all the options in the report, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) To accept the grant from Homes England as set out in Option 1, but to proceed with Options 1 and 2 if necessary.
- (2) To transfer £600,000 from the provisionally agreed HIF funding from the provisional to the approved capital programme to complete the pre-construction phase due to increasing costs associated with the increasing complexity of the Scheme.
- (3) To authorise the Director of Planning and Regeneration, in consultation with the appropriate lead councillor(s), to progress the Scheme from planning permission stage to preconstruction and to engage with suppliers to continue implementation of the Scheme as outlined in the report.

Reason for Decision:

To enter into an agreement for the Housing Infrastructure Fund with Homes England in connection with a major project.

Reasons for urgency:

Homes England had placed a deadline of 30 September 2019 on the Council accepting a funding agreement. Specific terms attached to the funding agreement were only received on 5 September 2019 and the closing date for LEP Expressions of Interest was 29 August 2019. It

was only after this date that the Council was able to confirm that there was no LEP funding for this project. It could not therefore have been foreseen that a report to the Executive would be required on 24 September 2019 with notice of intention to make the key decision in private session given 28 days in advance.

The meeting finished at 8.17 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Clandon & Horsley

Report of Director of Finance

Author: John Armstrong

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Lead Councillors responsible: David Goodwin / Pauline Searle

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Date: 22 October 2019

E-Petition: New Parking Restrictions at Kingston Meadows Car Park, East Horsley

Executive Summary

In January 2018, the Executive approved a proposal to extend parking restrictions to Council-owned parks, including Kingston Meadows Car Park in East Horsley. These measures were taken to improve access to parking for local clubs and societies, in particular the village hall, and users of the park's facilities.

On 8 July 2019, an e-petition was launched on the Council's website requesting the Council to "immediately suspend" the 'no return same day' restriction at Kingston Meadows. This petition received in excess of 500 signatures and under the Council's adopted Petition Scheme requires the Council to debate the matter raised by the e-petition and to indicate to the e-petition organiser what action, if any, the Council proposes to take in response.

The Council considered the matter at its meeting held on 8 October 2019, and its recommendation to the Executive is set out below.

Recommendation to Executive:

That the Executive be requested to consider the following:

- (1) To ask officers to review the parking order through the statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process as soon as practicable
- (2) To agree that the existing TRO remains in place until it is replaced
- (3) To implement a parking control that safeguards the use of the car park for park users
- (4) To agree that a revised control considers the following parameters:

- (a) removal of the no return element;
- (b) one free period of 4 hours each day per visitor within the hours of control (including allowing returns at no charge within the free period) and the ability to charge for additional hours for any time in excess of the free period or for any separate parking event outside of the free period in the same day;
- (c) restrictions that apply Monday to Friday (not at weekends and bank holidays); and
- (d) enforcement times of 9am to 6pm

with the final TRO to be issued for consultation being agreed by the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Countryside, Rural Life, and the Arts and the Lead Councillor for Waste, Licensing, and Parking.

Reason for Recommendation:

To comply with the requirements of the Council's adopted Petition Scheme, by approving action to be taken in response to the e-petition received in respect of this matter.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Executive to determine action to be taken in response to the e-petition received on 8 July 2019 following the introduction of off-street car parking restrictions by the Council at Kingston Meadows Car Park in East Horsley. The e-petition, which attracted 549 e-signatories, called on the Council

"To immediately suspend the Kingston Meadows Car Park 'no return same day' restriction, which is unfairly restricting genuine users of the Medical Practice, East Horsley Village Hall and Kingston Meadows Park from using these facilities in the manner for which they were intended. These new restrictions are causing unnecessary hardship to individuals, young families, surgery patients, U3A, Wheel of Care and other local interest groups."

- 1.2 The petition organiser's supporting statement accompanying the e-petition reads as follows:

"We believe that further consultation is needed between GBC, EHPC, WHPC and local interest groups to determine a suitable and proportionate parking order that prevents commuters from using the car park, whilst simultaneously ensuring that the needs and interests of local residents are met."

- 1.3 As the e-petition attracted over 500 e-signatories, the matter was referred to full Council for debate and to agree a response.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 Formal consideration by the full Council of proposals contained in a petition, and determination by the Executive of action to be taken is consistent with the

Council's desire to be open and accountable to its residents and to deliver improvements and enable change across the Borough.

3. Background

3.1 The Council's adopted Petition Scheme provides that where a petition contains more than 500 signatures, it will be referred to full Council for debate. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting.

3.2 This e-petition was referred for debate to the Council meeting held on 8 October 2019. At that meeting, the Lead Councillor for Waste, Licensing, and Parking proposed the following motion in response to the e-petition:

"That the Council's response to the e-petition is as follows:

That the Executive be requested to consider the following:

- (1) To ask officers to review the parking order through the statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process as soon as practicable
- (2) To agree that the existing TRO remains in place until it is replaced
- (3) To implement a parking control that safeguards the use of the car park for park users
- (4) To agree that a revised control considers the following parameters:
 - (a) removal of the no return element;
 - (b) one free period of 4 hours each day per visitor within the hours of control (including allowing returns at no charge within the free period) and the ability to charge for additional hours for any time in excess of the free period or for any separate parking event outside of the free period in the same day;
 - (c) restrictions that apply Monday to Friday (not at weekends and bank holidays); and
 - (d) enforcement times of 9am to 6pm

with the final TRO to be issued for consultation being agreed by the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Countryside, Rural Life, and the Arts and the Lead Councillor for Waste, Licensing, and Parking."

3.3 Following the debate, the Council formally adopted the motion. The Executive is now asked to consider the action recommended by Council.

4. New Parking Restrictions at Kingston Meadows Car Park

4.1 At its meeting on 23 January 2018, the Executive agreed as part of its consideration of the Parking Business Plan for 2018, to advertise an amendment to the Off Street Parking Order to propose a four hour maximum stay in the Kingston Meadows car park, East Horsley to apply Monday to Sunday between 6am and 8pm, with permits being available to local clubs and societies who need to use the car park, so they can stay longer without charge.

- 4.2 In a report on the Off-Street Parking Business Plan 2019-20 considered on 22 January 2019, the Executive noted the following by way of an update:

“4.7 Parking in Parks

The Parks and Countryside Service operate a number of car parks. Increasingly, however, these are being used by commuters, students and those meeting coaches. These uses reduce access for users of the parks including clubs that are based there.

Proposals to introduce controls were drafted and a consultation exercise was undertaken. As a result, the proposals have been amended and the process to introduce controls has commenced.

The changes will include new pay and display machines where appropriate. A parking order will be made 14 days prior to the order coming into effect and responses will be sent out to all those that responded to the consultation. A public notice will be published in the local press as well as on the Council’s website. These changes are planned to come into effect in early 2019.”

The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

- 4.3 The purpose of making a TRO on park car parks was to allow users, including tenants and visitors to the parks, to have ongoing access to on-site parking:
1. to stop or restrict all day parking in order to prevent or limit the blocking of spaces to enable use by park users
 2. to enable clubs and groups that are tenants to deliver their activities successfully, for example bowls
 3. to prevent abuse of the car parks from commuters and other groups to enable the legitimate use of the park
 4. to safeguard disabled parking spaces for disabled users.

- 4.4 Following a statutory process that included public consultation, the TRO¹ introduced a time limit of four hours free parking at Kingston Meadows Car Park between the hours of 6am to 6pm (no return) which came into force on 28 May 2019. The consultation included emailing all tenants located on the park. We reviewed over 90 representations from the consultation, which included consultation on proposed parking restrictions at other parks in the Borough, none of which objected to, or even referred to, the “no return” element.

No return

- 4.5 To prevent repeat free periods and thus parking all day, the no return provision was included. This was noted on the appendix maps within the set of documentation for the TRO (and consultation). Paragraph 5.8 of the report on the Parking Business Plan 2018-19, which was agreed by the Executive on 23 January 2018, states ‘Each car would be restricted to one session per day.’

¹ The Guildford Off-Street Parking Places (Amendment) (No. 5) Order 2019

Permits

- 4.6 Permits were issued as follows:

Season permits that expire December 2020:

- Medical Practice x 27
- Central Health Surrey x 3
- Parish Council x 9
- Kingston Meadows nursery on site for staff and parents x 34
- Kingston Meadows village hall (self-printed day permits)

Complaints

- 4.7 In addition to the e-petition, the Council has received 31 complaints. Those complaints have largely concerned the 'no return' restriction with an emphasis on the need for access to local facilities more than once in a day including, the village hall and services run therein, the doctors' surgery and healthcare services, local shops and recreational facilities.

- 4.8 In this correspondence some businesses/services have confirmed that they use the site for staff car parking. The NHS (District Nurses) use the park car park for staff parking for the site they occupy in the village, which does not have its own parking. Staff at the local pharmacy have raised the same problem as on-street parking in the village also has restricted time. They cannot park for the hours they need to work in one parking space and have to move cars around sites. There is a lack of all-day parking serving the shops and facilities of the village. The views of the Chairman of Trustees of East Horsley Village Hall are set out in a letter to the Leader of the Council at **Appendix 1** to this report.

- 4.9 In response to these complaints, and recognising some unintended impacts on some park visitors, we committed to undertaking a review of the parking order as part of the Parking Business Plan due in January 2020 with a view to potentially changing the Order. We also referred residents to the online petitions. Unfortunately, legal advice confirmed that no changes to the Order could be made without re-running the statutory process. There was therefore not an option to address the concerns in a quick way.

5. Key Issues that the Council took into consideration in its response to the e-petition

- 1) Consideration of the overarching policy for the car parks. In 2019, the policy was to protect the car park for parks users and its tenant(s). Councillors may wish to consider a policy that extends use of the car park to the wider community.
- 2) Whether charges should be used to support the enforcement required. Currently we have tried to limit any charging to keep our parks free to use and use 'no return' to control all day parking. Some options for a changed control would necessitate the need for some charging.

- 3) Resource implications for any future controls – short stay ticketing is resource intensive.

6. Consultations

- 6.1 A consultation was undertaken prior to a TRO being made and a public notice was published in the local press as well as on the Council's website. Public notices were also posted on lampposts within the car park. Prior to this, discussions were held with East Horsley Parish Council and the matter discussed at their parish council meetings.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 Public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making decisions and setting policies.
- 7.2 This duty has been considered in the context of this report and it has been concluded that there are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.
- 7.3 No Equality Impact assessments (EIA) have been conducted in relation to the subject matter raised by the petition.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report; however, councillors will be advised as to any financial implications should a change of policy direction be determined.
- 8.2 The cost of installing a ticket machine (see Option D (iii) and (iv) below) is approximately £5,000.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 As the off-street parking management function is an executive function, the response from the Council required the matter to be referred to the Executive for a final decision. Notwithstanding the recommendation from the Council, the Executive has discretion to take such action it deems appropriate provided it has the legal powers to do so and any budgetary provision necessary to implement such action.
- 9.2 Any change to the parking arrangements set out in the TRO will require the Council to undertake the statutory process of amending the TRO. The process includes publicising the proposed amendments, consulting on them for a minimum period of 21 days and considering any objections before taking a final decision.

10. Human Resource Implications

- 10.1 Creating a new TRO is resource demanding and took 12 months from the publication of the notice of the intention to make an Order to the publication of the notice that the Order was in place. It is anticipated that a re-run of the process may attract a larger response to the consultation. Parks and Countryside Services would manage the process in consultation with Parking Services and Legal Services. Re-running the consultation process may mean other work and projects will have to be rescheduled to accommodate the work required such as the Council's plans for playground improvements.
- 10.2 The Executive is asked to note that if it is considered necessary to conduct further consultation in respect of making changes to the parking restrictions at both Kingston Meadows Car Park and the Sutherland Memorial Park Car Park, officers strongly suggest that, in the interests of efficiency and keeping costs to a minimum, these take place concurrently as one consultation process.
- 10.3 The motion carried at the Council meeting in respect of the Kingston Meadows Car Park recommended that the review of the parking order through the statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process be carried out "as soon as practicable", whilst the motion in respect of the Sutherland Memorial Park Car Park recommended that the review be undertaken "as part of the annual parking business plan".

11. Summary of Options

11.1 Option A

To agree to take the action recommended by the Council on 8 October 2019:

- (1) To ask officers to review the parking order through the statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process as soon as practicable
- (2) To agree that the existing TRO remains in place until it is replaced
- (3) To implement a parking control that safeguards the use of the car park for park users
- (4) To agree that a revised control considers the following parameters:
 - (a) removal of the no return element;
 - (b) one free period of 4 hours each day per visitor within the hours of control (including allowing returns at no charge within the free period) and the ability to charge for additional hours for any time in excess of the free period or for any separate parking event outside of the free period in the same day;
 - (c) restrictions that apply Monday to Friday (not at weekends and bank holidays); and
 - (d) enforcement times of 9am to 6pm

with the final TRO to be issued for consultation being agreed by the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Countryside, Rural Life, and the Arts and the Lead Councillor for Waste, Licensing, and Parking."

The Executive has discretion to amend elements of the Council's recommendation. Alternatively, the Executive may wish to consider any one of the following further options, or variations thereof:

Option B

Keep the TRO in place and review as part of the annual parking business plan for 2020-21. This takes place in January 2020.

Option C

Temporarily cease enforcement of the TRO and review as part of the annual parking business plan.

Option D

Temporarily cease enforcement of the TRO and commence the process of making a new TRO as soon as possible for one of the sub-options listed below, all of which will require commencing the statutory process for a new TRO again.

Maintaining the car park for park visitors:

- (i) Change the time the TRO applies from 6am to 6pm seven days a week to between 10 am and 4pm (providing additional flexibility for dropping off, dog walking and drop off at the nursery) and limit it to weekdays only. This would include no return between the new applicable times. No ticket machine would be required but it would still restrict the ability of users to visit on multiple occasions during the hours of control (albeit to a lesser extent than at present).

Making the car park available for community use:

- (ii) Revoke the TRO (and return to allowing all day free parking to all), except for the enforcement of anti-social parking, through a new TRO. This will be unpopular with some tenants on the park, such as the village hall.
- (iii) Implement a charging regime, weekdays only, and remove no return from the TRO. This could be along the lines of 50 pence to £1 per hour between the times of 9am to 3pm, making an all day stay cost up to £6. This option would provide some all-day parking for the village, but at a cost (less than the car park for the station that is currently £7.38 per day on a weekly ticket). It would be free to park and visit the shops after 3pm or any of the park facilities and also before 9am for nursery drop off and early dog walks. New signage and a ticket machine would need to be installed.
- (iv) Maintain the four hours free but allow further charged for hours. Remove the no return from the TRO along with weekends and bank holidays. Alter the start time from 6am to 9am (to allow early dog walks, for example). Motorists will be required to display a ticket at all times even during the free period. The ticket machines will only allow one free period a day, after that a charge will apply. This allows multiple returns at any time of the day, free either during the free period or by adding paid for hours. Charges could be on an hourly basis for increased

flexibility. The need to display a ticket would restrict commuter and other all-day parking prior to 9am as the machines can be programmed to print tickets from this time only. After 9am, motorists could park the remainder of the day, but there would be a charge to do so.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 The Executive is asked to consider the e-petition and the Council's recommendation, approved at its meeting on 8 October 2019, and agree such action in response as it deems appropriate. The e-petition organiser, Susan Murray, has been invited to attend the Executive meeting and, if she so wishes, to address the meeting.

13. Background Papers

- Off-Street Parking Business Plan 2018, Executive, 23 January 2018
- Off-Street Parking Business Plan 2019-20, Executive, 22 January 2019

14. Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter addressed to the Leader of the Council from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of East Horsley Village Hall CIO

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East Horsley Village Hall CIO

The Trustees of East Horsley Village Hall CIO

Charity Registration Number 1180168

villagehall@easthorsley.net
www.easthorsleyvillagehall.co.uk
01483 285019

Kingston Avenue
East Horsley
Leatherhead
KT24 6QT

Councillor Caroline Reeves
31 Artillery Road
Guildford,
GU1 4NN

5th August 2019

From: Chris Tailby CBE
Chairman of Trustees, East Horsley Village Hall

Dear Councillor Reeves,

Petition against restricted parking at the East Horsley Village Hall.

I am writing on behalf of the Trustees of the East Horsley Village Hall to provide Councillors with background information and history of car parking at East Horsley Village Hall, in advance of a debate on the subject, as a result of a successful e-petition. I believe the debate is to be held at the Council Meeting on 8th October.

The signatories to the petition object to aspects of the new Parking Order which imposes parking restrictions in the East Horsley Village Hall car park ("the Hall car park"). The Order restricts parking to four hours with no return the same day.

Although the e-petition appears to be aimed at the "no return" provision, the Trustees are concerned to ensure that the four-hour parking restriction in the Hall car park is not removed as a result of the debate. The Trustees believe that it is extremely important for users and hirers of the Hall to be able to park in the Hall car park which they find difficult if spaces are blocked by commuters and other long-term parkers. Long term Hall hirers and users will not be affected as they will be issued with a day permit by the Hall.

Background

The lease of the East Horsley Village Hall site between GBC and the Trustees of the East Horsley Village Hall dated 30th December 1988 authorised the Trustees of the Hall and GBC to permit parking in the Hall and Medical Centre car parks. The medical centre has six designated spaces for use by the Centre. There are undesignated parking spaces in the Medical Centre area. The 67 car parking spaces which comprise the Hall car park were provided and paid for by the then Hall Committee as a condition of obtaining planning permission for the construction of the Hall.

The Hall car park is used by hirers and users of the Hall as well as users of the Kingston Meadow leisure facilities, walkers, dog-walkers, medical centre staff, users of the medical centre (patients), shop workers, commuters etc.

Problems caused by long term parkers

It may help to set the context of the restrictions now imposed if I record that the problems of long-term parking at the Hall by commuters, shop workers and others have been going on for a considerable time, and long before I became Honorary Chairman of Trustees nearly five years ago. The hall files show that over the years, my predecessors tried to make some headway with restricting commuter and other long-term parking but were unsuccessful. For example, in 2002 there was a discussion between GBC and the Parish Council, as Custodian Trustee of the Hall, to install a gated system for parking which would have been operated by the Caretaker. This system seems not to have been progressed.

During the time I have been involved with the Hall, both as Trustee and Chairman, from time to time successive Hall Managers and Caretakers have placed leaflets on parked cars requesting the owners not to block spaces. On occasions when I have been attending Arts Society meetings, I have photographed cars at 0930 and then seen the same cars still parked there at 1300. Regrettably these efforts have had little impact on the problem.

We know that some potential hirers of the hall have raised the problems of parking and in some cases have declined to hire the hall because of the parking problems.

Sometimes are worse than others. There are particular parking problems on three Wednesdays in the month when (apart from some holiday months) there are Arts Society and U3A meetings. Many of the people at the meetings have difficulty walking and rely on their car to attend the meeting. Unfortunately, I know of cases where members of Horsley Arts Society have turned up for the meeting but have been unable to park and have returned home.

The problem of lack of space is such that people park on the pavement next to the railway line which obstructs access by wheel chairs and push chairs. In the event of an emergency, it would be difficult for an ambulance or fire engine to access the Hall.

The “no return” rule

The Trustees realise that the terms of the current parking order have caused concern and strictly interpreted may cause difficulties for legitimate parkers, hence the e-petition. I do not know whether the supporters and signatories of the petition are people who regularly park for lengthy periods in the hall car park taking up space or have concerns about legitimate parking. And there was no discussion with me about the parking problems before the petition was launched.

Insofar as the petition complains about the “no return” provision in the parking order, there is real substance to the complaint since people may return to the parking area several times in one day to drop and collect children or items from the Hall or playground, walk dogs and visit the Medical Centre. All of those visits are likely to be of short duration and unlikely to cause parking problems for hall users. It should be possible to cover the issue of multiple short visits either by the way the order is enforced or maybe by means of a ticket machine.

The four-hour restriction

I very much hope that you will understand that the four-hour restriction is something that Trustees welcome as they believe that it will go some way to free up parking spaces and enable more hirers to park at the hall.

As I indicated at the beginning of this letter, the problems of long-term parking at the hall have been going on since it was first built and the four-hour restriction is at long last a step in the right direction to prevent long term parking. What we think needs to be “fixed” is the “no return” period for legitimate users of the Hall car park who wish to make multiple short-term visits.

Yours sincerely,

C R Tailby

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Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Burpham

Report of Director of Finance

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Lead Councillors responsible: David Goodwin / Pauline Searle

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Date: 22 October 2019

E-Petition: New Parking Restrictions at Sutherland Memorial Park car park, Burpham

Executive Summary

In January 2018, the Executive approved a proposal to extend parking restrictions to Council-owned parks, including Sutherland Memorial Park car park in Burpham. These measures were taken to improve access to parking for local clubs and societies and users of the park's facilities.

On 22 July 2019, an e-petition was launched on the Council's website requesting the Council to remove the new parking charges and restrictions at Sutherland Memorial Park car park. This petition received in excess of 500 signatures and under the Council's adopted Petition Scheme requires the Council to debate the matter raised by the e-petition and to indicate to the e-petition organiser what action, if any, the Council proposes to take in response.

The Council considered the matter at its meeting held on 8 October 2019, and its recommendation to the Executive is set out below.

Recommendation to Executive:

That the Executive be requested to consider the following proposal:

To temporarily cease enforcement of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at Sutherland Memorial Park Car Park and undertake a review as part of the annual parking business plan, such review to include consideration of options based on upon the following:

Maintaining the car park for park visitors:

- (a) Maintain the restrictions in the current TRO with the exception of removing the no return and replacing it with display of a valid ticket.

Making the car park available for community use:

- (b) Revoke the Order (and return to allowing all day free parking to all), except for the enforcement of anti-social parking, through a new TRO.
- (c) Change the time the order applies from 6am to 5pm weekdays to between 10 am and 5pm, maintaining five hours free (providing time for dropping off, dog walking and additional visits later in the day), as well as unlimited visits after 5pm. The no return would be removed and changed to display of a ticket. This would still restrict motorists from parking all day prior to when the ticket machine issues tickets (10am) and charges would apply to park beyond the five-hour free period.

Reason for Recommendation:

To comply with the requirements of the Council's adopted Petition Scheme, by approving action to be taken in response to the e-petition received in respect of this matter.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Executive to determine action to be taken in response to the e-petition received on 22 July 2019 following the introduction of off-street car parking restrictions by the Council at Sutherland Memorial Park car park in Burpham. The e-petition, which attracted 546 e-signatories, called on the Council

"To remove the newly introduced parking charges and "no return same day" restrictions at Sutherland Memorial Park, Burpham."

- 1.2 The petition organiser's supporting statement accompanying the e-petition reads as follows:

"The parking at Sutherland Memorial Park has been used for many years by parents of the local primary school as a parking area to enable them to drop off and collect their children without having to use the heavily congested Burpham Lane.

Following the introduction of the "no return same day" parking restrictions at the car park, it is no longer possible to use the car park for both drop-offs and pick-ups without paying the full £9 parking fee.

The restrictions are therefore expected to lead to an increase in the volume of cars driving down Burpham Lane directly to the school as people seek to avoid these charges. This increase in traffic is expected to pose a much higher risk of injury to those children that cycle or walk to the school, as well as cause a decrease in air quality in the immediate area.

Additionally, the parking has also historically been used by the staff at Burpham Primary School due to there being limited onsite parking, and the newly introduced restrictions will therefore lead to an increased financial burden on some of the staff that work there. The school currently enjoys an "Outstanding" overall Ofsted grade, and anything that impacts upon the school's ability to attract or retain staff could potentially jeopardise this achievement.

It is feared that the impact of the newly introduced parking restrictions will therefore be detrimental to the Burpham community and will adversely affect the younger members of the community the most.

This petition has been created with the aim of requesting that the Council consider the wider impact of the current restrictions on the Burpham community and remove the newly introduced restrictions and charges."

- 1.3 As the e-petition attracted over 500 e-signatories, the matter was referred to full Council for debate and to agree a response.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 Formal consideration by the full Council of proposals contained in a petition, and determination by the Executive of action to be taken is consistent with the Council's desire to be open and accountable to its residents and to deliver improvements and enable change across the Borough.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council's adopted petition scheme provides that where a petition contains more than 500 signatures, it will be referred to full Council for debate. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at the meeting.
- 3.2 This e-petition was referred for debate to the Council meeting held on 8 October 2019. At that meeting, a motion setting out a suggested response to the e-petition proposed by the Lead Councillor for Waste, Licensing and Parking was not supported by the Council. An alternative motion was proposed by Councillor George Potter as follows:

"That the Council's response to the e-petition is as follows:

That the Executive be requested to consider the following proposal:

To temporarily cease enforcement of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at Sutherland Memorial Park Car Park and undertake a review as part of the annual parking business plan, such review to include consideration of options based on upon the following:

Maintaining the car park for park visitors:

- (a) Maintain the restrictions in the current TRO with the exception of removing the no return and replacing it with display of a valid ticket.

Making the car park available for community use:

- (b) Revoke the Order (and return to allowing all day free parking to all), except for the enforcement of anti-social parking, through a new TRO.
- (c) Change the time the order applies from 6am to 5pm weekdays to between 10 am and 5pm, maintaining five hours free (providing time for dropping off, dog walking and additional visits later in the day), as well as unlimited visits after 5pm. The no return would be removed and changed to display of a ticket. This would still restrict motorists from parking all day prior to when the ticket machine issues tickets (10am) and charges would apply to park beyond the five-hour free period.”

3.3 Following the debate, the Council formally adopted the above motion. The Executive is now asked to consider the action recommended by Council.

4. New Parking Restrictions at Sutherland Memorial Park

4.1 At its meeting on 23 January 2018, the Executive agreed as part of its consideration of the Parking Business Plan for 2018, to advertise an amendment to the Off Street Parking Order to propose a four hour maximum stay in the Sutherland Memorial Park car park to apply Monday to Sunday between 6am and 8pm, with permits being available to local clubs and societies who need to use the car park, so they can stay longer without charge.

4.2 In a report on the Off-Street Parking Business Plan 2019-20 considered on 22 January 2019, the Executive noted the following by way of an update:

“4.7 Parking in Parks

The Parks and Countryside Service operate a number of car parks. Increasingly, however, these are being used by commuters, students and those meeting coaches. These uses reduce access for users of the parks including clubs that are based there.

Proposals to introduce controls were drafted and a consultation exercise was undertaken. As a result, the proposals have been amended and the process to introduce controls has commenced.

The changes will include new pay and display machines where appropriate. A parking order will be made 14 days prior to the order coming into effect and responses will be sent out to all those that responded to the consultation. A public notice will be published in the local press as well as on the Council’s website. These changes are planned to come into effect in early 2019.”

The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)

- 4.3 The purpose of making a TRO on park car parks was to allow users, including tenants and visitors to the parks, to have ongoing access to on-site parking:
- 1. to stop or restrict all day parking in order to prevent or limit the blocking of spaces to enable use by park users

2. to enable clubs and groups that are tenants to deliver their activities successfully, for example bowls
 3. to prevent abuse of the car parks from commuters and other groups to enable the legitimate use of the park
 4. to safeguard disabled parking spaces for disabled users.
- 4.4 Following a statutory process that included public consultation, the TRO¹ introduced a time limit of five hours free parking followed by a charge of £5 for up to 7 hours and £9 for over 7 hours at Sutherland Memorial Park between the hours of 6am to 5pm weekdays only (no return), which came into force on 28 May 2019. The consultation included emailing all tenants located on the park. We reviewed over 90 representations from the consultation, which included consultation on proposed parking restrictions at other parks in the Borough, none of which objected to, or even referred to, the “no return” element.

No return

- 4.5 To prevent repeat free periods and thus parking all day, the no return provision was included. This was noted on the appendix maps within the set of documentation for the TRO (and consultation). Paragraph 5.8 of the report on the Parking Business Plan 2018-19, which was agreed by the Executive on 23 January 2018, states ‘Each car would be restricted to one session per day.’

Permits

- 4.6 Season permits that expire December 2020 were issued as follows:

- SMP Amenities Club x 5
- Bowls Club x 6
- Sunshine nursery x6
- Sunshine Nursery Parents x 24
- Peter Rabbit Nursery x 5
- Peter Rabbit Parents x 25
- GBC SMP Based Staff x 1

Complaints

- 4.7 In addition to the e-petition, the Council has received nine complaints. Those complaints have reflected the concerns of the e-petition including the ‘no return’ restriction with an emphasis on picking up and dropping off at the nursery and the school, anticipating issues of congestion and safeguarding. Complaints have also noted an increased cost for those who park whilst working at the school and ‘over-paying’ for local residents’ short-term use.
- 4.8 Some representations have been received with regard to the use by Burpham Primary School and the dependence of the school for using the site as a park and stride. In total, ten emails objecting to the impact of the Order, primarily the no return aspect, have been received since enforcement began.

¹ The Guildford Off-Street Parking Places (Amendment) (No. 5) Order 2019

- 4.9 Burpham Bowling Club state that the no return restriction of access would be detrimental to the social wellbeing of many of its members, for whom the club is a social focus. If the no return restriction must remain, the Club has asked for an exemption for all club members by increasing the allocated number of annual parking permits, and an allocation of visitor permits for visiting teams/players.

5. Key Issues that the Council took into consideration in its response to the e-petition

- 1) Consideration of the overarching policy for the car parks. In 2019, the policy was to protect the car park for parks users and its tenant(s). Councillors may wish to consider a policy that extends use of the car park to the wider community.
- 2) Whether different charges should be used to support the enforcement required. Currently we have tried to limit any charging to keep our parks free to use and use 'no return' to control all day parking. Some options for a changed control would necessitate the need for some charging.
- 3) Resource implications for any future controls – short stay ticketing is resource intensive.
- 4) Burpham Primary School has also relied on Sutherland Memorial Park to facilitate park and stride to school by including it in its travel plan. The Local Planning Authority objected to this inclusion when granting a previous planning consent to the school requesting that Surrey County Council review and change the travel plan, however the use continues. In addition the adopted Burpham Local Neighbourhood Plan has the following policy

Policy: B-AT 3: School Parking

Provision for all-day parking by staff and pupils at all schools is strongly supported. Onsite parking should be provided and drop off and pickup zones should be away from the school entrance to avoid congestion.

It is important that we do not introduce contradictory policies to sustainable school travel, as well as our own objectives in regard of air quality and sustainable travel.

6. Consultations

- 6.1 A consultation was undertaken prior to a TRO being made and a public notice was published in the local press as well as on the Council's website. Public notices were also posted within the car park.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 Public authorities are required to have due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) when making decisions and setting policies.

- 7.2 This duty has been considered in the context of this report and it has been concluded that there are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.
- 7.3 No Equality Impact assessments (EIA) have been conducted in relation to the subject matter raised by the petition.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report; however, councillors will be advised as to any financial implications should a change of policy direction be determined.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 As the off-street parking management function is an executive function, the response from the Council required the matter to be referred to the Executive for a final decision. Notwithstanding the recommendation from the Council, the Executive has discretion to take such action it deems appropriate provided it has the legal powers to do so and any budgetary provision necessary to implement such action.
- 9.2 Any change to the parking arrangements set out in the TRO will require the Council to undertake the statutory process of amending the TRO. The process includes publicising the proposed amendments, consulting on them for a minimum period of 21 days and considering any objections before taking a final decision.

10. Human Resource Implications

- 10.1 Creating a new TRO is resource demanding and took 12 months from the publication of the notice of the intention to make an Order to the publication of the notice that the Order was in place. It is anticipated that a re-run of the process may attract a larger response to the consultation. Parks and Countryside Services would manage the process in consultation with Parking Services. Re-running the consultation process will mean other work and projects will have to be rescheduled to accommodate the work required such as the Council's plans for playground improvements.
- 10.2 The Executive is asked to note that if it is considered necessary to conduct further consultation in respect of making changes to the parking restrictions at both Sutherland Memorial Park Car Park and the Kingston Meadows Car Park, officers strongly suggest that, in the interests of efficiency and keeping costs to a minimum, these take place concurrently as one consultation process.
- 10.3 The motion carried at the Council meeting in respect of the Sutherland Memorial Park Car Park recommended that the review be undertaken "as part of the annual parking business plan", whilst the motion in respect of the Kingston Meadows Car Park recommended that officers review the parking order through the statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process "as soon as practicable".

11. Summary of Options

11.1 To agree to take the action recommended by the Council on 8 October 2019:

To temporarily cease enforcement of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) at Sutherland Memorial Park Car Park and undertake a review as part of the annual parking business plan, such review to include consideration of options based on upon the following:

Maintaining the car park for park visitors:

- (a) Maintain the restrictions in the current TRO with the exception of removing the no return and replacing it with display of a valid ticket.

Making the car park available for community use:

- (b) Revoke the Order (and return to allowing all day free parking to all), except for the enforcement of anti-social parking, through a new TRO.
- (c) Change the time the order applies from 6am to 5pm weekdays to between 10 am and 5pm, maintaining five hours free (providing time for dropping off, dog walking and additional visits later in the day), as well as unlimited visits after 5pm. The no return would be removed and changed to display of a ticket. This would still restrict motorists from parking all day prior to when the ticket machine issues tickets (10am) and charges would apply to park beyond the five-hour free period.”

The Executive has discretion to amend elements of the Council’s recommendation.

11.2 Alternatively, the Executive may wish to consider other options.

12. Conclusion

12.1 The Executive is asked to consider the e-petition and the Council’s recommendation, approved at its meeting on 8 October 2019, and agree such action in response as it deems appropriate. The e-petition organiser, Richard Smee, has been invited to attend the Executive meeting and, if he so wishes, to address the meeting.

13. Background Papers

- Off-Street Parking Business Plan 2018, Executive, 23 January 2018
- Off-Street Parking Business Plan 2019-20, Executive, 22 January 2019

14. Appendices

None.

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of the Chief Finance Officer

Author: Claire Morris, Director of Finance

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Email: claire.morris@guildford.gov.uk

Lead Councillor responsible: Joss Bigmore

Tel: 07974 979369

Email: joss.bigmore@guildford.gov.uk

Date: 22 October 2019

Annual Audit Letter 2018-19

Executive Summary

The external audit for 2018-19 is complete and the independent auditor has now issued their Annual Audit Letter. The letter is attached at Appendix 1. The Annual Audit Letter includes findings and recommendations that were raised in the Audit Findings Report, which was presented to Corporate Governance and Standards Committee on 30 July 2019.

The Council's annual external audit is carried out by Grant Thornton and their annual audit letter summarises the key findings from their work on the Council's financial statements and on its arrangements for value for money. Grant Thornton gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 31 July 2019. The auditors were satisfied that the Council has put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

At its meeting on 19 September 2019, the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee considered the Annual Audit Letter and commended it for formal approval by the Executive.

Recommendation to Executive:

That the Annual Audit Letter for 2018-19 be approved.

Reason for Recommendation:

To approve the Annual Audit Report

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The report sets out the Annual Audit Letter received from Grant Thornton, our external auditors.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 Good financial management underpins all that the Council does and helps to achieve the priorities set down in the Corporate Plan.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Annual Audit Letter from Grant Thornton is attached as **Appendix 1**. Within the letter, they refer to the Audit Findings Report that the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee considered at its meeting held on 30 July 2019.

- 3.2 The Annual Audit Letter summarises the key findings arising from:

- (a) auditing the 2018-19 accounts and Whole of Government Accounts return
- (b) assessing the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources
- (c) certification of grants claims and returns.

- 3.3 The Council received an unqualified opinion on the accounts and its arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness and an assurance statement on the Whole of Government Accounts.

- 3.4 The auditors are still working on the housing benefit grant claim and will report the findings of the audit to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, in their annual certification letter early next year.

- 3.5 To assess the Council's value for money, Grant Thornton reviewed the Council's medium term financial plan and general fund capital programme. Their findings and recommendations were reported as part of the audit findings report to the Committee on 30 July 2019.

4 Consultations

- 4.1 No consultations are required for this report.

5 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The International Standard on Auditing (UK and Ireland) 260 requires the external auditor to report any issues arising from the audit of the Financial Statements to those charged within governance. In the Council's case, this is the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.

8. Human Resource Implications

8.1 There are no human resource implications arising as a result of this report

9. Summary of Options

9.1 Consideration of alternative options is not applicable to this report.

10. Conclusion

10.1 The Council received an unqualified opinion on its accounts for 2018-19 and its arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness. We also received an assurance statement on our Whole of Government Accounts submission.

11. Background Papers

None

12. Appendices

Appendix 1: Grant Thornton: Annual Audit Letter Year ended 31 March 2019

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The Annual Audit Letter for Guildford Borough Council

DRAFT

This version of the report is a draft. Its contents and subject matter remain under review and its contents may change and be expanded as part of the finalisation of the report. This draft has been created from the template dated DD MMM YYYY

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Year ended 31 March 2019
August 2019



Contents



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Executive Summary

Purpose

Our Annual Audit Letter (Letter) summarises the key findings arising from the work that we have carried out at Guildford Borough Council (you / your / the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2019.

This Letter is intended to provide a commentary on the results of our work to the Council and external stakeholders, and to highlight issues that we wish to draw to the attention of the public. In preparing this Letter, we have followed the National Audit Office (NAO)'s Code of Audit Practice and Auditor Guidance Note (AGN) 07 – 'Auditor Reporting'. We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to the Council's Corporate Governance & Standards Committee as those charged with governance in our Audit Findings Report on 30 July 2019.

Our work

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Materiality | We determined materiality for the audit of your financial statements to be £2,130,000, which is approximately 2% of your gross revenue expenditure. |
| Financial Statements opinion | We gave an unqualified opinion on your financial statements on 31 July 2019. |
| Whole of Government Accounts | We completed work on your consolidation return following guidance issued by the NAO. |
| Use of statutory powers | We did not identify any matters which required us to exercise our additional statutory powers. |
| Value for Money arrangements | We were satisfied that the Council put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We reflected this in our audit report to the Council on 30 July 2019. |
| Certification of Grants | We carry out work to certify your Housing Benefit subsidy claim on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. Our work on this claim is in progress and will be finalised by the 30 November 2019 deadline. We carry out work to certify your Housing Capital Receipts grant on behalf of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Our work on this claim will be carried out before the 31 January 2020 deadline. We will report the results of this certification work to the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee. |
| Certificate | We certified that we have completed the audit of the financial statements of Guildford Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice on 31 July 2019. |

Respective responsibilities

We have carried out our audit in accordance with the NAO's Code of Audit Practice, which reflects the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act). Our key responsibilities are to:

- give an opinion on your financial statements (section two)
- assess your arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources (the value for money conclusion) (section three).

In our audit of your financial statements, we comply with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs) and other guidance issued by the NAO.

Audit of the Financial Statements

Our audit approach

Materiality

In our audit of your financial statements, we use the concept of materiality to determine the nature, timing and extent of our work, and in evaluating the results of our work. We define materiality as the size of the misstatement in the financial statements that would lead a reasonably knowledgeable person to change or influence their economic decisions.

We determined materiality for the audit of your financial statements to be £2,130,000, which is approximately 2% of your gross revenue expenditure. We used this benchmark as, in our view, users of your financial statements are most interested in where you have spent your resources in the year.

We set a lower threshold of £107,000, above which we reported errors to the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee in our Audit Findings Report.

The scope of our audit

Our audit involves obtaining sufficient evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements to give reasonable assurance that they are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes assessing whether:

- the accounting policies are appropriate, have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed;
- the significant accounting estimates made by management are reasonable; and
- the overall presentation of the financial statements gives a true and fair view.

We also read the remainder of the financial statements including the narrative report and annual governance statement to check it is consistent with our understanding of the Council.

We carry out our audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) and the NAO Code of Audit Practice. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Our audit approach was based on a thorough understanding of your business and is risk based.

We identified key risks and set out overleaf the work we performed in response to these risks and the results of this work.

Audit of the Financial Statements

Significant Audit Risks

These are the significant risks which had the greatest impact on our overall strategy and where we focused more of our work.

| Risks identified in our audit plan | How we responded to the risk | Findings and conclusions |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Management override of internal controls</p> <p>Under ISA (UK) 240 there is a non-rebuttable presumed risk that the risk of management over-ride of controls is present in all entities. You face external scrutiny of your spending and this could potentially place management under undue pressure in terms of how they report performance.</p> <p>We therefore identified management override of control, in particular journals, management estimates and transactions outside the course of business as a significant risk, which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement.</p> | <p>As part of our audit work we</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluated the design effectiveness of management controls over journals analysed the journals listing and determined the criteria for selecting high risk unusual journals tested unusual journals recorded during the year and after the draft accounts stage for appropriateness and corroboration gained an understanding of the accounting estimates and critical judgements made by management and considered their reasonableness with regard to corroborative evidence evaluated the rationale for any changes in accounting policies, estimates or significant unusual transactions. | <p>There were no issues to report</p> |
| <p>Valuation of land and buildings</p> <p>You revalue your land and buildings on a five-yearly basis. This valuation represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements due to the size of the numbers involved (£739 million of property, plant and equipment in 2017/18) and the sensitivity of this estimate to changes in key assumptions. Additionally, management will need to ensure the carrying value in the financial statements is not materially different from the current value at the financial statements date, where a rolling programme is used.</p> <p>We therefore identified valuation of land and buildings as a significant risk, which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement, and a key audit matter.</p> | <p>As part of our audit work we</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evaluated management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate, the instructions issued to valuation experts and the scope of their work evaluated the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the valuation expert wrote to the valuer to confirm the basis on which the valuation was carried out to ensure that the requirements of the Code are met challenged the information and assumptions used by the valuer to assess completeness and consistency with our understanding tested revaluations made during the year to see if they had been input correctly into your asset register challenged management's judgement that assets not revalued at 31 March 2019 were fairly stated | <p>There were four control points raised in regards to valuation and one agreed adjustment to the valuation figure included in the financial statements. Apart from these matters there were no other issues in respect of the valuation of your land and buildings.</p> |

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1

Audit of the Financial Statements

Significant Audit Risks

These are the significant risks which had the greatest impact on our overall strategy and where we focused more of our work.

| Risks identified in our audit plan | How we responded to the risk | Findings and conclusions |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Valuation of pension fund net liability</p> <p>Your pension fund net liability, as reflected in its balance sheet as the net defined benefit liability, represents a significant estimate in the financial statements.</p> <p>The pension fund net liability is considered a significant estimate due to the size of the numbers involved (£90 million in your balance sheet in 2017/18) and the sensitivity of the estimate to changes in key assumptions.</p> <p>We therefore identified valuation of your pension fund net liability as a significant risk, which was one of the most significant assessed risks of material misstatement, and a key audit matter.</p> | <p>As part of our audit work we</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> updated our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management to ensure that your pension fund net liability is not materially misstated and evaluated the design of the associated controls; evaluated the instructions issued by management to their management expert (an actuary) for this estimate and the scope of the actuary's work; assessed the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the actuary who carried out your pension fund valuation; assessed the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by you to the actuary to estimate the liability; tested the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in the notes to the core financial statements with the actuarial report from the actuary; undertook procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (as auditor's expert) and performing any additional procedures suggested within the report. | <p>There were two adjustments agreed with management which increased the overall pension liability. Other than these, our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of the valuation of your pension fund net liability.</p> |
| <p>Group accounts</p> <p>In 2016, you set up North Downs Housing Limited, a subsidiary to enable you to provide homes across a range of tenures other than social rent.</p> <p>As at 31 March 2018, you held a 100% share ownership in the company and an intercompany balances (in the form of loans and equity) of £4.4m. Aside from capital acquisitions, the trading activities of North Downs Housing have been limited to date.</p> <p>However, as North Downs Housing continues to expand, the preparation of group accounts will need to be considered going forward. At present, management is not proposing to adopt Group Accounts on the basis that the rental income at North Downs Housing is not yet deemed to be financially significant. The Code of Practice requires Authorities with subsidiaries to publish group accounts unless their interest is considered not material and so there is an element of judgement in determining whether the presence of a subsidiary 'triggers' the need for Group Accounts.</p> | <p>As part of our audit work we</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> updated our understanding of the capital and operational activity taking place within North Downs Housing; evaluated management's determination and disclosures over whether group accounts are required. | <p>We are satisfied that management's judgement not to consolidate North Downs Housing Limited into a group set of financial statements on the basis of materiality is appropriate in 2018/19.</p> |

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Appendix 1

Audit of the Financial Statements

Audit opinion

We gave an unqualified opinion on your financial statements on 31 July 2019.

Preparation of the financial statements

The capacity of your finance and payroll teams was impacted by the Future Guildford and ERP projects. This resulted in delays to provision of supporting working papers for audit and response to queries. Your draft financial statements fell below your own high standards that you have set in previous years. In the context of the reduced hours available to work on the financial statements the finance team should be commended on being able to provide a set of financial statements for audit by the statutory deadline.

As specified above, the demands on the finance and payroll teams from council-wide projects impacted the time available for audit queries, resulting in delays to the audit process. This was escalated to your finance director who took decisive action to free up people to provide the backlog of information on 12 July 2019. By working closely with your finance team we were able to complete the audit and provide the audit opinion on 31 July 2019.

Issues arising from the audit of the financial statements

We reported the key issues from our audit to the Corporate Governance & Standards Committee on 30 July 2019.

Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report

We are required to review the Council's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report. You published them on your website in the Statement of Accounts in line with the national deadlines.

Both documents were prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant supporting guidance. We confirmed that both documents were consistent with the financial statements prepared by management and with our knowledge of the Council.

Whole of Government Accounts (WGA)

We carried out work on the Council's Data Collection Tool in line with instructions provided by the NAO. We issued an assurance statement which confirmed the Council was below the audit threshold.

Certificate of closure of the audit

We certified that we have completed the audit of your financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice on 31 July 2019.

Value for Money conclusion

Background

We carried out our review in accordance with the NAO Code of Audit Practice, following the guidance issued by the NAO in November 2017 which specified the criterion for auditors to evaluate:

In all significant respects, the audited body takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.

Key findings

Our first step in carrying out our work was to perform a risk assessment and identify the risks where we concentrated our work.

The risks we identified and the work we performed are set out overleaf.

As part of our Audit Findings report agreed with you in July 2019, we agreed recommendations to address our findings.

Overall Value for Money conclusion

We are satisfied that in all significant respects you put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2019.

Value for Money conclusion

Value for Money Risks

| Risks identified in our audit plan | Findings and conclusions |
|--|--|
| <p>Medium Term Financial Planning</p> <p>You have identified a cumulative gap of £10.4 million between projected resources and budgeted expenditure over the four years to 2022/23. In part, this relies on continuing to deliver the budgeted level of savings from existing projects. You have identified a need for longer term transformation of service delivery to be able to deliver sustainable services in the period covered by the medium term financial strategy. You have engaged an external consultant (Ignite Consulting) who in November 2018 presented a report entitled “Guildford Borough Council Future Operating Model Blueprint”. It set out to provide the ‘blueprint’ for the delivery of an ambitious transformation programme for you including a refined business case, an organisational design and a costed implementation approach and plan. We will review your project management and risk assurance frameworks to establish how you are identifying, managing and monitoring these risks.</p> | <p>The findings from our work were reported in detail in our Audit Findings report in July 2019. We concluded that you have put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2019.</p> |
| <p>General Fund Capital Programme</p> <p>You approved a General Fund Capital Programme for five years to 2022/23. This is an area of considerable spend, with a net cost of £96 million, and involves decision-making against a backdrop of many variables. The execution and timing of capital expenditure may also have revenue implications.</p> | <p>The findings from our work were reported in detail in our Audit Findings report in July 2019. We concluded that you have put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in your use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2019.</p> |

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1

A. Reports issued and fees

We confirm below our final reports issued and fees charged for the audit and provision of non-audit services

Reports issued

| Report | Date issued |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Audit Plan | March 2019 |
| Audit Findings Report | July 2019 |
| Annual Audit Letter | August 2019 |

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| | Planned £ | Actual fees £ |
|--|---------------|------------------|
| Statutory audit | 51,300 | TBC |
| Housing Benefit Grant Certification | 20,000 | TBC |
| Housing Capital Receipts Grant Certification | 1,500 | TBC |
| Total fees | 72,800 | TBC |

| Area | Reason | Fee proposed |
|---|--|--------------|
| Assessing the impact of the McCloud ruling | The Government's transitional arrangements for pensions were ruled discriminatory by the Court of Appeal last December. The Supreme Court refused the Government's application for permission to appeal this ruling. As part of our audit we have reviewed the revised actuarial assessment of the impact on the financial statements along with any audit reporting requirements. | 1,600 |
| Pensions – IAS 19 | The Financial Reporting Council has highlighted that the quality of work by audit firms in respect of IAS 19 needs to improve across local government audits. Accordingly, we have increased the level of scope and coverage in respect of IAS 19 this year to reflect this. | 1,200 |
| PPE Valuation – work of experts | As above, the Financial Reporting Council has highlighted that auditors need to improve the quality of work on PPE valuations across the sector. In addition, the use of a second management expert led to further work being required. We have increased the volume and scope of our audit work to reflect this. | 2,400 |
| Total | | 5,200 |

Agenda item number: 7
Appendix 1

A. Reports issued and fees

We confirm below our final reports issued and fees charged for the audit and provision of non-audit services

Reports issued

| Report | Date issued |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Audit Plan | March 2019 |
| Audit Findings Report | July 2019 |
| Annual Audit Letter | August 2019 |

Fees

| Page | Planned £ | Actual fees £ |
|--|---------------|------------------|
| Statutory audit | 51,300 | TBC |
| Housing Benefit Grant Certification | 20,000 | TBC |
| Housing Capital Receipts Grant Certification | 1,500 | TBC |
| Total fees | 72,800 | TBC |

Fees for non-audit services

| Service | Fees £ |
|--|--------|
| Non-Audit related services | 14,500 |
| - Place Analytics and CFO Insights Licence | |

Non- audit services

- We have considered whether non-audit services might be perceived as a threat to our independence as the Council's auditor and have ensured that appropriate safeguards are put in place.

The above non-audit services are consistent with the Council's policy on the allotment of non-audit work to your auditor

Audit fee variation

As outlined in our audit plan, the 2018-19 scale fee published by PSAA of £44,300 assumes that the scope of the audit does not significantly change.

There are a number of areas where the scope of the audit has changed, which has led to additional work. These are set out in the following table.

| Area | Reason | Fee proposed |
|---|--|--------------|
| Assessing the impact of the McCloud ruling | The Government's transitional arrangements for pensions were ruled discriminatory by the Court of Appeal last December. The Supreme Court refused the Government's application for permission to appeal this ruling. As part of our audit we have reviewed the revised actuarial assessment of the impact on the financial statements along with any audit reporting requirements. | 1,600 |
| Pensions – IAS 19 | The Financial Reporting Council has highlighted that the quality of work by audit firms in respect of IAS 19 needs to improve across local government audits. Accordingly, we have increased the level of scope and coverage in respect of IAS 19 this year to reflect this. | 1,200 |
| PPE Valuation – work of experts | As above, the Financial Reporting Council has highlighted that auditors need to improve the quality of work on PPE valuations across the sector. We have increased the volume and scope of our audit work to reflect this. | 1,200 |
| Audit overruns | As identified in our Audit Findings Report, we experienced a number of delays to our audit work and therefore had to apply additional resources to deliver the audit. | 4,500 |
| Value for money conclusion | Additional work to review the medium term financial strategy assumptions | 7,000 |
| Total | | 15,500 |

Appendix 1
Agenda item number: 7

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Ash South and Tongham; Clandon and Horsley; Effingham; Friary and St. Nicolas; Holy Trinity; Merrow; Pilgrims; Shalford; Tillingbourne

Report of Director of Planning and Regeneration

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Date: 22 October 2019

Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2020-2025)

Executive Summary

This report recommends the adoption of the reviewed Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2020 – 2025). The Management Plan contributes to setting out the policy framework for development within the Surrey Hills AONB.

The Management Plan for the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB') has been reviewed as required under legislation. The Plan has been prepared jointly with other local authorities within the Surrey Hills AONB area. The review of the Management Plan comprised a deliberately 'light-touch' process, the main changes are summarised within the report. Each local authority is required to adopt the Management Plan separately.

Recommendation to Executive

- (1) That the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2020 – 2025) (Appendix 1) be approved for adoption and publication by the Council.
- (2) That the Director of Planning and Regeneration be authorised, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Planning, Regeneration, and Housing Delivery to agree such minor alterations as proposed by the AONB Board as she may deem necessary.

Reason for Recommendation:

To meet our statutory obligations under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report requests that the Executive adopts the revised Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2020 – 2025). The adoption of the revised AONB Management Plan is required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 The Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2020 – 2025) will assist the Council in meeting its priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan (2018 – 2023). Many of the objectives outlined in the Council's 'place-making', 'community' and 'innovation' priorities will be supported through the application of guidance in the Management Plan.

- 2.2 Through the application of its guidance, the Management Plan will support;

Place-Making

- the delivery of the objectives in the Guildford borough Local Plan, including the provision of the range and mix of housing that people need, including affordable housing.
- making travel easier within the borough through the application of its transport and traffic policies.

Community

- the protection of our environment, ensuring that development within the AONB has regard to its character and significance as a designated natural asset.

Innovation

- the sustainable and proportionate economic growth of rural businesses within the AONB area to help provide the prosperity and employment that people need.

3. Background

- 3.1 Designated landscapes cover a significant proportion of the borough. Covering 36.41% of land in Guildford borough, the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB') is a nationally-important landscape designation, wherein great weight is provided to the conservation of landscape and scenic beauty of the area by the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF'). Overlying the AONB, alongside areas on the fringes of the AONB, is the Area of Great Landscape Value ('AGLV'), which is a County-level designation that indicates important landscape in its own right, but also of significance as a protective buffer to the AONB.

- 3.2 Sections 89 and 90 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) require local authorities and Conservation Boards to produce AONB Management Plans, which must be reviewed and published at intervals of no more than five years. A

new Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan will therefore need to be adopted by the relevant local authorities in 2019.

The Surrey Hills Board

- 3.3 The Surrey Hills AONB covers parts of neighbouring authorities, including Tandridge, Reigate and Banstead, Mole Valley, and Waverley. In order to secure that there is a co-ordinated approach to the conservation, enhancement and management of the AONB, a Joint Advisory Committee was set up, known as the 'Surrey Hills Board'.
- 3.4 The Board is made up of representatives of the constituent local authorities, including Surrey County Council, and partner organisations such as the Surrey Wildlife Trust and the National Trust. Guildford is currently represented by Councillor Susan Parker. The Board was previously chaired by one of the local authority core members, but has decided to move to an independent chair, who is currently being recruited.
- 3.5 The Board prepares the AONB Management Plan for the local authorities, with the assistance of officers from the Surrey Hills AONB unit and the local authorities. However, the responsibility for the Management Plan remains with the local authorities and each individual authority is required to adopt it separately. This report explains the Plan, the changes made to it within the review, and seeks approval to adopt it.

Policy Context

- 3.6 The policy context is provided by national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and local policies provided in the Guildford Borough Corporate Plan (2018 – 2023) and Policy P1 of the Local Plan: strategy and sites (2015 – 2034). In summary, these documents emphasise the importance of conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the AONB, having regard also to the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage, whilst recognising the benefits of development, in planning considerations. The AGLV continues to play a role in protecting the AONB from development in areas outside its periphery that may be harmful to it.
- 3.7 The purpose of the AONB Management Plan is to provide context for the various initiatives that support the conservation and enhancement of the protected landscape. The document seeks to reflect existing planning policy in relevant local authorities, whilst drawing together the range of other policy issues that are relevant to the consideration, enhancement and management of the landscape character, wildlife conservation and cultural heritage of the area. The Plan also seeks to promote the enjoyment of, and access to, the Surrey Hills AONB as consistent with the protection of the area's landscape character.

Management Plan Review

- 3.8 In March 2019, the Surrey Hills Board approved a draft of the Management Plan that is recommended for adoption by the constituent local authorities. The Plan represents the result of several months of work, during which officers have reviewed the previous Management Plan and carried out targeted consultations on proposed amendments.
- 3.9 The review of the AONB Management Plan takes place within the context of two significant broader pieces of work. The first comprises the review of the boundaries of the AONB, which is to be undertaken by Natural England. Natural England have advised that this is likely to take place either toward the end of this year or early 2020. The outcome of the review could result in areas that are currently designated as AGLV being included within the AONB.
- 3.10 The second project comprises the Government's review of protected landscapes, known as the Glover Review. The Glover Review reported recently and there may be significant implications for AONBs depending on the Government's response to the review, including issues relating to governance, financing and statutory purposes. For this reason, the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan review has been deliberately 'light-touch' in approach, until such time that the implications of the Glover Review have been made clearer.

Summary of Main Amendments

- 3.11 The reviewed draft Management Plan is attached to this report at Appendix 1. The main revisions made to the existing Management Plan (2014 – 2019) are set out below, these amendments have been made in order to update the plan and ensure that the revised Plan responds to changing circumstances, the responses provided during the consultations, and the priorities of the constituent local authorities and other partners.

Section 1:

- 3.12 A number of minor amendments have been made in order to provide an updated context for the Plan.

Section 2:

- 3.13 The Statement of Significance and Vision have remained largely unchanged, reflecting the high degree of support for both during the consultation. The revised text now makes specific mention of the health and wellbeing benefits of the landscape, reflecting updated guidance.
- 3.14 The opportunity has been taken to redraft the policies regarding agriculture in order to make them simpler and more understandable, without altering their emphasis. In this, the policy on farm diversification has been amended in order to make it more responsive to creating opportunities to increase biodiversity.
- 3.15 The coverage of woodlands has been expanded in order to include hedgerows and veteran trees. The relevant policies have been amended slightly to improve readability and include reference to biosecurity in relation to disease control.

- 3.16 The biodiversity policy has been amended to include reference to water resources in order to reflect the importance of wetland habitats. In the supporting text, reference has been made to the catchment partnerships, including the work being undertaken to enhance the river catchments to meet the Water Framework Directive targets. An additional paragraph has been included in order to link to the section in the NPPF that covers biodiversity and references to biodiversity net gain. Amendments to Policy B4 have been made in order to seek biodiversity gains through the planning process, reflecting updated guidance.
- 3.17 The Historic and Cultural policy section has been revised with very minor amendments to improve readability.
- 3.18 In relation to policies for Recreation and Tourism, the term 'Wellbeing' has been included within the title, reflecting updated guidance. Other revisions to this area have been minor, with the exception of the removal of policies relating to sustainable tourism and development criteria for recreation enterprises, which are now covered within the planning policies area.
- 3.19 The main changes to the planning policies section are to supporting text, providing additional guidance on the landscaping of developments, developments resulting in the loss of agricultural use, and external lighting.
- 3.20 The transport policies remain largely unchanged, with the exception of the inclusion of additional supporting text relating to schemes designed to declutter rural roads and the value of sensitive verge management to biodiversity objectives.
- 3.21 The 'Development and Local Economy' policies have been retitled to 'Economy, Tourism and Community Development'. The amendments to this section have sought to make the policies clearer, with an increased emphasis on sustainable development, the promotion of local services and produce, affordable housing and community transport.

Section 3:

- 3.22 This section has been subject to minor redrafting. The amendments help to explain the role and function of the Surrey Hills 'family' of organisations, the Surrey Hills 'Brand', and the strategic targets underlying the Plan. Finally, there is a section on monitoring, which remains unchanged.

General summary:

- 3.23 The revision of the Management Plan does not result in major changes to any of the policies of supporting text. Amendments have been introduced to improve readability and to reflect an updated context in terms of policy and initiatives, in relation to biodiversity net gain, for example, and previous omissions such as consideration of hedgerows.

Environmental Considerations

- 3.24 The Management Plan has been the subject of both the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) processes. An SEA environmental report has been produced which concluded that no significant environmental effects would result from the plan. The plan was screened against HRA “likely significant effects” in relation to EU protected habitats within or nearby the AONB. The HRA screening found that significant effects could result from some of the policies in the plan. An ‘appropriate assessment’ of those policies concluded that the plan would not lead to adverse effects on the integrity of EU sites.
- 3.25 Having carried out the SEA/HRA, it is considered that adopting the Management Plan will not lead to adverse environmental effects under the HRA or SEA regulations. The SEA and HRA documents will be made available alongside the final report for adoption.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 Consultation was undertaken prior to the review of the Management Plan. The consultation was launched at the Surrey Hills Symposium at the University of Surrey, which marked the 60th anniversary of the Surrey Hills AONB, covering various themes such as climate change and recreational pressures on the AONB. The discussions were documented and helped to provide background information for the review. Another platform for consultation comprised an online survey, which demonstrated a high degree of support for the existing Management Plan policies, the Vision, and the Statement of Significance.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan is a high-level document, which contains broad policies for the design and management of development within the AONB area. The document relates to new development and its impacts on the designated landscape character, and to the development or improvement of local facilities that would benefit all groups equally. The guidance remains consistent irrespective of the owner, builder, occupant, or visitor. As such, the Plan provides land-use benefits which are unlikely to impact differentially based on any particular protected characteristic.
- 5.2 However, the document does recognise that there are currently significant barriers to disabled people accessing and experiencing the countryside. The purpose of the Plan is to promote a high-standard of development throughout the AONB, which includes consideration of appropriate access and transport throughout the area. The proposals will therefore not have an adverse impact for residents and visitors with disabilities, but are more likely to have a positive impact.
- 5.3 The Plan seeks to promote access to and appropriate use of the landscape and its character equally to all individuals. As such, the likely effect of the Plan will be to advance good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 5.4 An Equalities Impact Assessment Screening will be completed and provided with the final report for adoption.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no additional financial resources or costs identified as a result of the adoption and implementation of the revised Management Plan. Since the Plan represents a 'light-touch' review, it is not expected that additional resources will be required beyond those available during the previous Management Plan period (2014 – 2019). The sources of funding for small-scale capital projects will remain grant schemes, revenue funding and agreed Neighbourhood CIL funds.
- 6.2 The Council is a core funding partner of the Surrey Hills Board, contributing in the region of £5,230 annually. The majority of the Surrey Hills Unit running costs are provided in the form of an annual DEFRA grant. The Council's position as a core funding partner is not affected by the decision to adopt the Management Plan.
- 6.3 As noted previously, the major review of designated landscapes will report to the Government later this year. The review will include recommendations on the funding of both AONBs and National Parks. It has been recognised that AONBs are not funded generously, particularly when considered in relation to National Parks, and there may be some positive recommendations in relation to AONB funding. However, the Glover review may potentially include the recommendation to make it a statutory requirement to implement the Management Plan, which might have financial implications in the future.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The production of the Management Plan is a statutory requirement under section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 7.2 The procedures to be followed upon review of the Management Plan are prescribed by section 90 of that Act. In addition, regulation 9 (1) of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 requires authorities to determine whether or not a SEA is required for certain plans, policies or programmes. Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 requires authorities to determine whether or not a full HRA is required. As noted, in the report, both SEA and HRA processes have been completed.
- 7.3 Pursuant to section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000, the Executive of the Council has the power to adopt the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan.

8. Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 There are no known implications for members of staff in relation to the adoption of the reviewed Management Plan.

9. Summary of Options

9.1 Option 1:

To adopt the reviewed Management Plan (2020 – 2025), with the delegation of any minor (non-material) amendments or corrections made during the proofing and publication of the document to the Director of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the appropriate Lead Councillor.

This option comprises the recommended course of action. The option represents the least risk to the Council in adopting the Management Plan within the statutory time period. Minor changes in the proofing and publication of the document can be made without inciting further delays.

9.2 Option 2:

To agree to adopt the reviewed Management Plan (2020 – 2025), subject to changes to the document as proposed by councillors or without the delegation of minor changes as outlined above.

This option would require the document to be redrafted to incorporate significant changes, meaning that the Plan would be resubmitted to the other local authority partners for review and require approval by the AONB Board. Alternatively, the option to not include the delegation of minor changes would require the Plan to be resubmitted to the Executive for adoption following its final publication. These two courses of action are likely to significantly increase the risk that the Council does not adopt the Management Plan within the statutory period.

9.3 Option 3:

To reject the adoption of the Plan and require a substantial redraft.

This option would ensure that the Council would not be able to adopt the Management Plan within the statutory period. The revision of the Management Plan at this stage would likely require an extension to the statutory adoption period by DEFRA and would have serious implications of risk for the other local authorities in the AONB area. It is unknown how DEFRA and the other local authorities would respond. This option is likely to have negative financial implications.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 This report requests that the Executive adopt the revised Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2020 – 2025). The adoption of the revised AONB Management Plan is required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). The Management Plan will help in delivering many of the Council's priorities as identified within the Corporate Plan (2018 – 2023). The recommended course of action from the available options is to adopt the reviewed Management Plan (2020 – 2025), with the delegation of any minor (non-material) amendments or corrections made during the proofing and publication of the document to the Director of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the appropriate Lead Councillor.

11. Background Papers

Strategic Environmental Assessment Non-Technical Summary.

Strategic Environmental Assessment Full Report.

Habitats Regulations Assessment Report.

Equalities Impact Assessment.

Background papers are available at:

<https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/23109/Surrey-Hills-AONB-Management-Plan-2020-2025->

12. Appendices

Appendix 1: Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2020 – 2015).

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Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2020 – 2025)

**Post Consultation Draft
For Surrey Hills AONB Board**

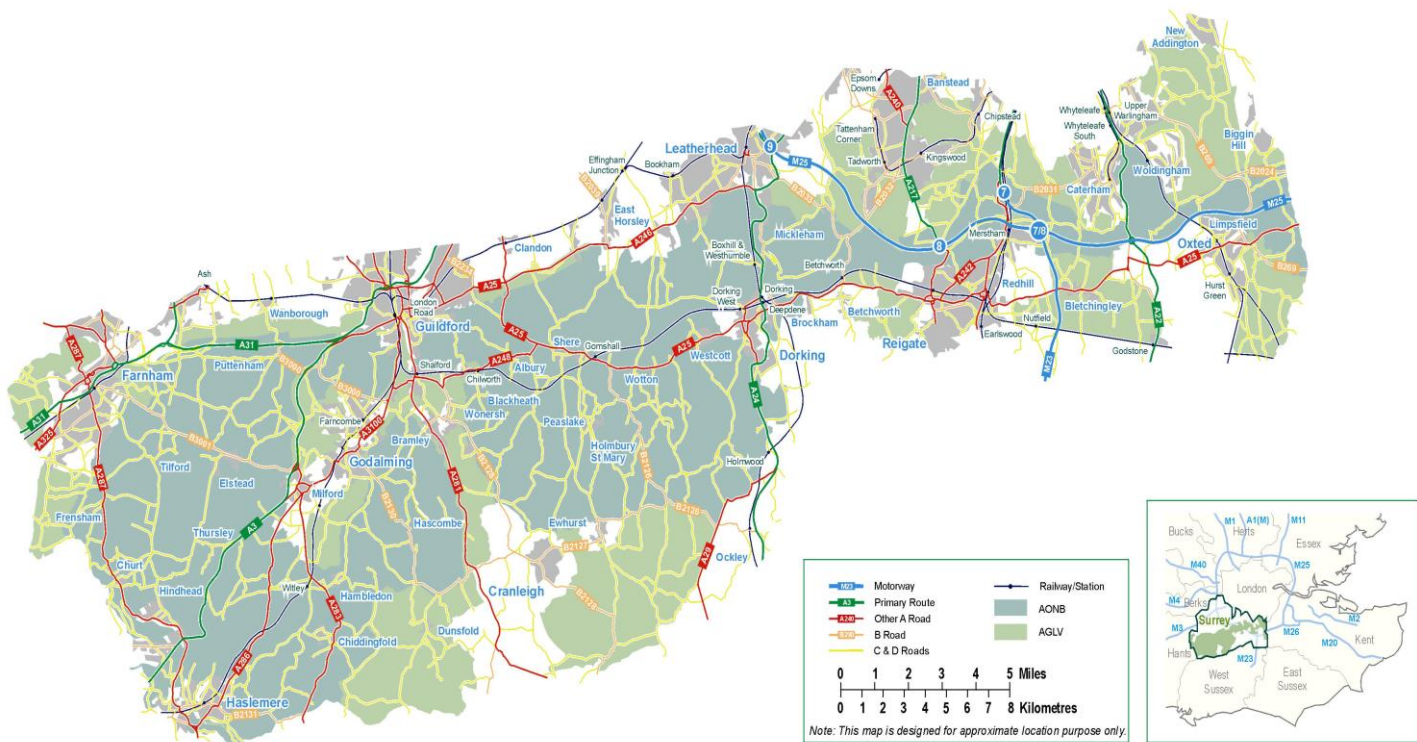
August 2019

Preface

The Surrey Hills was one of the first landscapes in the country to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1958. It is now one of 37 AONBs in England and has equal status in planning terms to a National Park. The Surrey Hills AONB stretches across rural Surrey, covering about a quarter of the county.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) placed a statutory duty on AONB local authorities to produce and review management plans that will formulate their policy for the management of the area. The Management Plan is being prepared by the Surrey Hills AONB Board and will need to be adopted by Guildford Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, Tandridge District Council, Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council.

[To include national and regional context maps]



Ministerial Foreword

I am fortunate that England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are part of my Ministerial responsibilities. Whether it be rolling hills, sweeping coastline or a tranquil village, spending time in an AONB can stir the heart and lift the spirit.

This is a pivotal moment for all AONBs. The Government has set its ambition in the 25 Year Environment Plan which states clearly the importance of natural beauty as part of our green future, while AONBs retain the highest status of protection for landscape through national planning policy. Leaving the EU brings with it an opportunity to develop a better system for supporting our farmers and land managers, who play such a vital role as stewards of the landscape. And the Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty led by Julian Glover - the first of its kind for generations - will make recommendations to make sure our designated landscapes can flourish in the years ahead.

In my visits to AONBs around the country, I have been struck by the passion of many people - farmers, volunteers, and hard-working staff - for the beautiful places they live and work. In this spirit I am delighted to welcome publication of this Statutory Management Plan for the Surrey Hills. It is significant that this plan will be delivered in partnership by those who value the Surrey Hills. I would like to thank all those involved in preparation of this document, and wish you the best of success in bringing it to fruition.

Lord Gardiner

Minister for National Parks



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

INSERT

My Surrey Hills Preface (photo collage to be included on inside cover)

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Appendices can be found on the web-portal (www.surreyhills.gov.uk)

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

The Surrey Hills was one of the first landscapes in the country to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1958. The Surrey Hills AONB stretches across Surrey's North Downs, from Farnham in the west to Oxted in the east of the county. It also includes the Greensand Hills which rise in Haslemere and stretch eastwards to Leith Hill, the highest point in Southern England. Over the centuries, its mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs and commons has inspired some of the country's greatest artists, writers and architects. The Surrey Hills attract millions of visitors every year and they make an important contribution to the economy of Surrey.

1.2 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a designation for an area of land that is of national importance for its natural beauty. The origins of AONBs and National Parks lie in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949.. In June 2000, the Government confirmed that AONBs have the same level of landscape quality and share the same level of protection as National Parks.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is 'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area'. All public bodies have a legal duty to 'have regard' to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB.

1.3 The global, national and regional context

The Surrey Hills AONB is one of 34 AONBs in England. Together, they cover over 15% of the land surface. The distinctive character and natural beauty of England's AONBs make them some of the most special and cherished places in England. AONBs are living, working landscapes that contribute some £16bn every year to the national economy. Over two thirds of England's population live within half an hour's drive of an AONB and around 150 million people visit the English AONBs every year, spending in excess of £2bn.

AONBs are part of the global network of protected landscapes. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources has six management categories covering all types of protected areas. Our AONBs and National Parks fall into Category V – landscapes managed mainly for conservation and recreation.

As a protected landscape, the Surrey Hills AONB is playing a key role in the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, ratified by the UK in 2006. The Convention aims to improve the protection and management of important landscapes and to increase co-operation across Europe. The Surrey Hills AONB Board is an active member of the National Association for AONBs and through this association works with other AONBs across the country.

1.4 An ecosystems approach

A healthy natural environment underpins the health and wellbeing of our society and our economy. The natural resources – or 'Natural Capital' – of the Surrey Hills includes its trees and woodland, rivers and streams, aquifer and other water bodies, farmland and grassland, soils, landscape and cultural assets. The benefits or services that we get from these natural resources are known as Ecosystems Services.

The policies and targets for the management of the Surrey Hills must conserve and enhance our natural capital and the benefits which society receives from this natural capital. In doing so, they will contribute to delivering the aims of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. This plan calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. One of its key goals is to use resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently by:

- a) sustainably managing land and water environments
- b) protecting and providing more, better and joined up natural habitats
- c) conserving water resources and improving water quality
- d) improving the Surrey Hills resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change
- e) increasing the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means
- f) conserving and improving soils
- g) reducing litter and environmental pollution, especially air pollution
- h) managing and mitigating the risk of flooding
- i) supporting the sustainable production and local use of food, forestry and raw materials
- j) improving opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing
- k) stimulating sustainable tourism and economic activity
- l) delivering high-quality sustainable design that protects the local distinctiveness of the Surrey Hills

1.5 The relationship with the National Planning Policy Framework

The primary legislation in relation to AONB designation is the CRoW Act (2000) and before that the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. Policy in relation to land use in AONBs set out is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Revised 2019), Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

The National Planning Policy Framework, confirms the requirement in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF provides specific planning guidance for plan makers and decision takers in relation to AONBs and confirms (para 172) that: "Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues." It goes on to state that "the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited".

AONBs and their Management Plans are material considerations in the planning system. The 'great weight test' is significant and one of the most stringent legal tests that can be applied under planning law. In specific relation to major development the NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for major developments in AONBs except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. It then sets a series of tests that have to be assessed in relation to major development. What constitutes 'major development' has not been defined. However, the NPPF states that it "is a matter for the decision maker taking into account its nature, scale and setting and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined".

It should be recognised that the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" in the NPPF does not override the imperative to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty within AONBs (paragraph 11 footnote 6 of the NPPF). CHECK

The NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for their areas within Local Plans and accordingly deliver the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. The NPPF also confirms that allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value (counting the AONB as the highest value), that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting landscape areas will be judged (development affecting AONBs includes impact on their setting), and that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Local Plans should set out policy for AONBs for their areas and define their special qualities making reference to other relevant planning policy documents including the AONB Management Plan. Further to this, the existence of an AONB designation should be considered at the very outset in Local Plan preparation and should influence the Local Plan in terms of the strategic location of development, access issues, green infrastructure, Community Infrastructure Levy, use of natural resources and landscape and environmental protection. Simply including a single policy reference to AONBs in determining planning applications does not demonstrate that local planning authorities have met their legal duty under Section 85 of the CRoW Act to have proper regard to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

1.6 The Statutory AONB Management Plan

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are conserved and enhanced. The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, as confirmed by Section 82 of the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* (CRoW Act).

The Government has confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent, so the protection given by the land use planning system to natural beauty in both types of area should also be equivalent. The AONB designation is also of international importance, recognised as a Category V Protected Landscape by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Sections 88 and 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) state that each local authority and Conservation Board must prepare and publish a Management Plan for their AONB, which must then be reviewed at intervals of no more than five years. AONB Management Plans are adopted by the partner local authorities and the policies contained within these plans carry statutory force.

Legislation relating to AONBs places additional responsibilities on local authorities and the planning system:

- AONBs are defined within the EIA Regulations for specific consideration as a “sensitive area”.
- The CRoW Act, Section 85-Duty of Regard, requires all public bodies down to parish council level to consider the nationally protected status given to AONBs in any land use related decisions. This includes the determination of planning applications and the formulation of Local and Neighbourhood Plans.
- AONB Management Plans have been recognised as a ‘material consideration’ in the planning decision making process.

- Land within AONBs is recognised differently under the Town and Country Planning Act as Article 1(5) land (which for example restricts certain permitted development rights).

As well as formulating the policy of local authorities in relation to their AONBs, AONB Management Plans are intended to:

- highlight the special qualities and the enduring significance of the AONB and the importance of its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, identifying those features that are vulnerable to change
- present an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities, regardless of administrative boundaries
- set out agreed policies which will help secure that vision
- identify what needs to be done, by whom and when, in order to achieve these objectives
- stimulate action aimed at helping people to discover, enjoy and understand the local landscape and its natural and cultural features
- identify actions which will support those economic and social activities which in themselves contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

The AONB Management Plan is not intended to be a panacea for all the perceived problems which local communities might face, nor is it intended to duplicate or replace other statutory plans which affect the area. It is, however, the only document with a focus on the whole of the AONB and the only one that is primarily focused on the purpose of AONB designation, which is the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

1.7 How the AONB Management Plan was prepared

This Management Plan was prepared by the Surrey Hills AONB Board, a Joint Committee, on behalf of the six local authorities that have a statutory duty to adopt the Plan. The AONB Unit was supported in this work by members of the AONB's Officers Working Group, Partnership Members and people from a wide range of organisations covering areas such as conservation, land management and tourism. It was also informed by reviewing the existing AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019) and consulting on the extent to which it should evolve in the light of progress and change.

The Surrey Hills Symposium on 28th November 2018 was a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the AONB designation and an opportunity to debate a vision for the Surrey Hills over the next 60 years. Attended by over 300 delegates, the debate highlighted:

- The importance of the London City region context, particularly in relation to the Green Belt, development and recreation pressures on the Surrey Hills
- The need for improvements to recreation infrastructure and catering for all users, including those with limited mobility.
- Climate change as a major threat to the existing land management regimes and habitats, whilst at the same time stimulating the development of strategies and technological opportunities to counter global warming. Viticulture as a major land use and economic development opportunity but one that raises questions about the scale of land use change in terms of landscape and, labour supply and infrastructure including visitor centres
- The branding and profile of the Surrey Hills including whether AONBs could be designated as National Parks

- Creating wild places for people to explore, wild camp and undertake other 'experiential' activities whilst at the same time protecting areas of ecological value

An on-line survey was launched at the Surrey Hills Symposium and was live until 14th January 2019. 293 individuals and organisations completed the survey which has informed revisions to the Plan.

The Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan is one of a national family of Plans. It reflects best practice in management planning following advice and guidance developed by the National Association for AONBs. For more information on AONBs visit the National Association for AONBs website: www.landscapesforlife.org.uk

1.8 Environment Report

The Surrey Hills AONB Office has commissioned the report, and the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of which it forms the principal output, as part of the preparation of this revised Management Plan. This environmental report was prepared by Surrey County Council's in-house environmental assessment service,

The report explains how the likely significant environmental impacts of the revised Management Plan have been identified, and how that information has been fed into the review of the Plan. The report is prepared in response to the requirements set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No.1633). The preparation of this report was undertaken during 2019, and the report is based on the information available to Surrey County Council during the said period of time. A full copy of the report and the non-technical summary are available on the website portal.

1.9 Defining the 'Natural Beauty' of the Surrey Hills AONB

" Natural Beauty is not just the look of the landscape but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries" ¹. Dr Nicola Bannister, landscape historian, has stated "The term 'natural' in the designation title is a misnomer as no part of the Surrey Hills is 'natural' in the wild sense; rather it is less intensively managed compared with other parts of Surrey, retaining landscape features and semi-natural habitats which have a high ecological diversity and interest." ²

Although the Surrey Hills is now one of the most wooded of the nationally protected areas in the country, it is still an intriguingly diverse landscape characterised by hills and valleys, traditional mixed farming, a patchwork of chalk grassland and heathland, sunken lanes, picturesque villages and market towns. It has associations with many of the country's great artists, writers, musicians and designers. It is often regarded as the first real countryside south of London and is a rural retreat for many thousands of daily commuters.

¹ Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A Guide for AONB Partnership Members, Countryside Agency, 2001 (CA 24))

² Surrey Hills AONB: Historic landscape descriptions, Dr Nicola R Bannister, July 2002 (unpublished)

The Hills stretch across the chalk North Downs that run from Farnham in the west, above Guildford, Dorking and Reigate, to Oxted in the east. They contain a mosaic of woodland, scrub and open downland with combes, spring lines, chalk pits, quarries and striking cliffs. To the south are the Greensand Hills that include Black Down, the Devil's Punch Bowl and Leith Hill, with ancient sunken lanes and geometric fields that have been enclosed from heaths and wooded commons. In between are the valleys of the Wey, Tillingbourne and Mole rivers, and the heaths of Frensham, Thursley and Blackheath. The Low Weald forms the southern fringe of the AONB, with its extensive woodlands and small irregular fields, hedgerows and wooded shaws.

Although geology, soils and climate have created the bones of the landscape, the appearance of the Surrey Hills has been shaped for centuries by the changing patterns of land use and settlement. Over much of the Surrey Hills the historic settlement pattern remains largely intact: small picturesque villages of Saxon and medieval origin in the valleys; isolated farmsteads on chalk slopes, valley bottoms and in clearings won from the woodland; large country houses with designed landscapes, including parkland; market towns; and remnants of seventeenth and eighteenth century industry.

The consultation on this Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan has sought feedback on the features that define the special character of the Surrey Hills. These features are as follows, each with their own contribution to landscape significance and subject to a range of threats and pressures:

- Views
- Woodland
- Heathland
- Tranquillity
- Commons
- Country lanes
- Downland
- Historic buildings
- Dark skies
- Farmland
- Parkland

1.10 The Landscape Character of the Surrey Hills AONB

The Surrey Hills Landscape Character Assessment (updated in 2012) carried out to support evidence for a review of the boundary of the AONB, identified 13 local landscape character areas:

The North Downs: The Hog's Back and Puttenham Vale
The North Downs: Ranmore and Hackhurst Downs
The North Downs: The Mole Gap
The North Downs: Scarp and Holmesdale
Greensand Valley: The Upper Wey
Greensand Valley: Pippbrook and Tillingbourne
Greensand Plateau: Shackleford
Greensand Plateau: Witley and Churt
Greensand Hills: Hindhead

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Appendix 1

Greensand Hills and Wooded Weald: Hascombe

Greensand Hills: Leith Hill

Wooded Weald: Chiddingfold

Wooded Weald: Wonersh to Holmwood

For each of these character areas the annex to the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan includes a statement of significance, and identifies the key features and issues. This assessment has helped to inform the Management Plan policies and the strategy to target action to certain parts of the AONB. Further information on the Landscape Character Areas listed above can be found on the website Management Plan portal.

1.11 Activities associated with the Surrey Hills

The consultation process identified the principal activities associated with the Surrey Hills and views on how the Management Plan has and should respond to the issues and challenges associated with them. The activities are listed below, with the main activities being identified first:

- Walking
- Dog walking
- Visit to pub, restaurant, tea rooms etc
- Mountain biking
- Photography
- Horse riding
- Road cycling
- Running
- Visiting attractions
- Leisure drive
- Shopping

1.12 The key pressures and threats:

Many changes have taken place since the Surrey Hills was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958. Although it is still a beautiful and protected area, and despite being contained wholly within the London Metropolitan Green Belt, the threats and pressures on its special character and the vitality of its communities have come in many forms. The key pressures and threats were identified during the process of developing the Management Plan, in order of concern, were:

- Housing development
- Traffic
- Energy (oil, gas, fracking)
- Loss of local services
- Off road vehicles
- Excavation of minerals
- Aircraft noise
- Climate change
- Recreation pressure
- Changes in agriculture

These pressures are the result of the great many environmental, social and economic forces that are often external to the Surrey Hills AONB, particularly the effect of the London City Region on Surrey. Although it is recognised that it will be difficult to address these pressures in the Management Plan, a purpose of the Plan is to ensure that the impact of these forces on the Surrey Hills is recognised and that the local authority partners and other stakeholders exercise the duty under statute to conserve and enhance the AONB by having regard to the AONB Management Plan policies as set out in Section 2.

1.13 Monitoring the Condition of the Surrey Hills AONB

Monitoring the condition of the Surrey Hills AONB will play an important role in identifying the key issues and in assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness of Management Plan policies. The establishment of a monitoring mechanism through the use of simple but meaningful Surrey Hills AONB headline indicators provides a means of assessing and communicating change over time to inform the five-yearly reviews of the Plan. The headline indicators for the Surrey Hills are each related to achieving the vision statements that in turn relate to the character of the landscape and the enjoyment and understanding of it, and thus to the purposes of the designation.

A State of the Surrey Hills AONB Report will be prepared by the Surrey Hills Board. This report will provide: baseline data for each of the headline indicators; details for the rationale that underlies each of the indicators; the data sources and monitoring systems that will be used; and links to other targets and indicators such as the Local Transport Plan.

1.14 Reviewing the AONB Management Plan

The Surrey Hills Management Plan is required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CroW) 2000 to be reviewed at intervals not less than every five years after its publication. The review process is planned to start in 2022 to produce a plan to cover the period 2025 - 2030. The preparation of the new Plan will be informed by monitoring the implementation of this Plan and an assessment of the condition of the Surrey Hills AONB with the preparation of the State of the Surrey Hills report. It will also need to take account any changes in the national approach to Designated Landscapes following the Government's response to the Glover Review. The new Plan will summarise the achievements in the preceding five years. The Plan will also review the planning and policy context and provide an opportunity for widespread consultation on the key issues the new plan needs to address.

1.15 The implications of a Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review

Significant parts of the Surrey countryside adjacent to the AONB are designated at a county level as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). These areas have acted as a buffer to the AONB but they also have their own inherent landscape quality and are significant in conserving the landscape setting of some towns and villages. Although AGLV land is not a national designation, previous Surrey Hills AONB Management Plans recognised the importance of AGLV land in protecting the integrity of the Surrey Hills AONB landscape, particularly views to and from the AONB. The application of the Management Plan policies and actions to AGLV land has been instrumental in helping to conserve and enhance the Surrey Hills.

In October 2013, the Surrey Hills AONB Board formally requested that Natural England consider modifying the AONB boundary. In 1958 the Surrey Hills AONB was the second landscape to be designated an AONB, and there has never been a review of the boundary. A purpose of the review will be to establish whether land designated at a County level as AGLV should be included in the AONB. Following a comprehensive landscape character assessment of the AONB and AGLV land, candidate areas that meet the AONB criteria have been identified. In February 2014, Natural England agreed to progress a Modification Order. It is anticipated that this process will take about two to three years to progress. The aim will be to generate a consensus on the land to be included in the AONB, particularly amongst the six AONB local authorities, in order to reduce any need for a lengthy and expensive Public Inquiry.

The decision to pursue the modification of the AONB boundary will have a significant impact on the review process, but such a process is expected to take two to three years to complete. It is therefore expected that the implications of a reviewed AONB will be consolidated within the next AONB Management Plan 2025 – 2030, but this will be kept under review during the course of this AONB Management Plan and Government advice.

SECTION 2: THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

All public bodies, including local authorities, Government agencies, and statutory undertakers must, in accordance with Section 85 of the Countryside and Right of Way (CroW) Act 2000, have “due regard” to the purposes of AONB designation in the carrying out of their functions. The policies in this Plan will guide them in the fulfilment of their duty under the Act.

2.2 Statement of Significance

In guiding the policies, the Management Plan includes the following statement which states the value of the Surrey Hills AONB:

The Surrey Hills AONB is one of England’s finest landscapes, equivalent in beauty to a National Park and designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958.

Its landscape mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs and commons has inspired some of the country’s greatest artists, writers and architects over the centuries. The AONB includes internationally and nationally important priority habitats which support protected species.

Surrey Hills attract millions of visitors every year who contribute to the economy of the area . The Hills are protected as part of London’s Metropolitan Green Belt and provide an outstanding natural resource for London and Surrey residents to enjoy outdoor pursuits, taste local food and drink, and to explore market towns and picture-postcard villages.

2.3 The Vision

The purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape. Yet the landscape, along with the rest of the English countryside, is not just a result of natural forces. It is constantly evolving as a result of the many social and economic forces placed upon it. The vision for the Surrey Hills recognises that the landscape will change but it needs to ensure that it changes in a way that conserves and enhances its special qualities. In doing so, it also needs to maintain the social and economic viability of the Surrey Hills in a sustainable manner.

The following long term vision statement sets the context and guides the Management Plan policies:

- The Surrey Hills AONB is recognised as a national asset in which its natural and cultural resources are managed in an attractive landscape mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs and commons. It provides opportunities for business enterprise and for all to enjoy and appreciate its natural beauty for their health and well-being.

2.4 Agriculture

The beauty of the Surrey Hills is largely the result of the way the land has been shaped and maintained by farmers, landowners and estate managers over the centuries. This has created a beautiful landscape composed of a mosaic of small to large fields enclosed by hedgerows, shaws and copses, and farm buildings, many of which demonstrate building traditions dating back to medieval times and constructed of local materials. Having a viable and diverse farming economy reduces the pressure to fragment the landscape, which then becomes more vulnerable to development and inappropriate management.

The high land and labour prices, together with the depression in agricultural incomes, create a massive pressure to give up farming, to intensify production or to diversify into activities that may not necessarily protect and enhance the special character of the area. The Surrey Farm Study 2014 highlighted the pressures that farming is under in Surrey, but there are new opportunities to diversify, for example into viticulture, which could have a major impact on the landscape, the rural economy and new ways to enhance biodiversity. There is a particular concern with the loss of farmland to the keeping of horses as this can degrade the landscape.

With the Government's commitment to new environmental land management schemes following the planned exit from the European Union, the Plan seeks to ensure that farming remains a viable enterprise in the Surrey Hills and continues to play a positive role in maintaining its outstanding landscape. This means raising awareness of the important role that farmers play, supporting them as custodians of the landscape, and exploiting commercial opportunities to capitalise on the millions of people who cherish the Surrey Hills as a place to live, work and visit.

Aim: Agriculture plays a positive role in maintaining the outstanding and diverse character of the Surrey Hills

Agricultural Management Policies:

- F1 Farming as a viable and sustainable enterprise, within and adjacent to the AONB, will be supported through the development of initiatives consistent with good management of land, make a positive contribution to increasing biodiversity and conserving or enhancing landscape character.
- F2 The availability of advice and financial assistance through the Government's Environmental Land Management schemes will be designed to encourage sustainable land management practices alongside the maintenance and enhancement of traditional landscape features.
- F3 Farm diversification schemes will be supported where they help to maintain and enhance the special landscape character of the AONB and have a demonstrable, positive amenity impact, lead to an increase in biodiversity and contribute to the vitality of the Surrey Hills economy.
- F4 Development leading to a loss of farmland will normally be resisted unless there is an overriding public interest.
- F5 A wider understanding and awareness of agricultural practice will be promoted where this encourages and supports the creation and maintenance of the outstanding landscape character of the Surrey Hills.

State of the AONB Indicators for Agriculture:

- Area of land in registered agricultural use and average farm holding size
- Area of agricultural land in agri-environment schemes

2.5 Woodland, Hedgerows and Veteran Trees

The Surrey Hills is one of the most wooded of all the National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the country with approximately 40% woodland cover. Its character varies from the patchwork of irregular woods, to old coppice and shaws of the Wooded Weald, to the conifer plantations of large estates on the Greensand Hills, to the ancient yew and box woodlands on the North Downs. The 1947 woodland census suggests that the Surrey Hills landscape has changed from a predominantly open landscape with coppiced woodland to a landscape with largely unmanaged secondary woodlands extending onto former commons, heathland and downland.

The major threats to the woodland habitats in the 21st century arise from their fragmentation and loss, lack of management and inappropriate planting of non-native species. Small woodland ownership has increased within the Surrey Hills but many owners are unaware of what management should be undertaken. Although the Management Plan consultation demonstrated the great value that people attach to woodlands, the consequences of fragmentation and neglect include the loss of biodiversity and a perception that woodland is of little use and therefore little value. In addition, the uncontrolled expansion of woodland and scrub can be at the expense of other more important semi-natural habitats, particularly heathland and chalk downland. Woodlands are also prone to disease and climate change, which is already having a major impact on the Surrey Hills landscape.

Hedgerows and veteran trees are an important landscape feature and important wildlife corridors linking woodland habitats. They are also important elements of the historic landscape. They need to be appropriately managed to maintain their diversity and health. The Surrey Wildlife Trust's hedgerow proposal will target in particular the management of hedges in the chalk hills of the North Downs. This project will encourage the dissemination of traditional hedgerow management techniques, particularly hedge-laying.

The Management Plan policies seek to raise awareness and understanding amongst the public and small woodland owners of the value of woodlands and the need for management. There need to be financial incentives to cover the cost of management through well-resourced and targeted grant schemes. New markets for woodland products need to be developed, such as opportunities to work with local saw mills on added value products for craft related uses, highway signs and fencing. There is a particular opportunity in the Surrey Hills area to develop wood fuel projects and build on the success of the annual Wood Fair through Surrey Hills Enterprises.

Aim: Woodlands, hedgerows and veteran trees are sustainably managed and linked to conserve and enhance the landscape, ecological, archaeological and recreational value of the wider Surrey Hills landscape

Woodland Management Policies

W1 Woodland owners and managers will be supported to manage all woodlands, hedgerows and veteran trees that contribute to the landscape character.

- W2 Markets for timber and other forest products will be identified, promoted and supported in order to generate incomes to help sustain appropriate woodland management.
- W3 The wider importance of trees and woodlands and the need for their management, including disease control and bio-security, will be promoted through the provision of advice, information on grant schemes and public awareness campaigns.
- W4 The benefits of removing inappropriate trees and secondary woodland, particularly for the restoration of heathland and chalk grassland, will be promoted to improve biodiversity and enable the reinstatement of views.
- W5 Opportunities will be taken to extend and link woodland / hedgerow habitats for landscape, nature conservation, recreation and educational purposes.

State of the AONB Indicators for Woodland:

- Area of Ancient Woodland and other important woodland under positive management
- Area of woodland cover

2.6 Biodiversity and Water Resources

The Surrey Hills is an area rich and diverse in wildlife due to its varied geology, landform and traditional land management. It contains internationally important sites for nature conservation ranging from the extensive lowland heaths on the Greensand to the chalk grassland and yew and box woodlands on the North Downs. The Surrey Hills landscape also contains an important matrix of smaller features like hedgerows, shelterbelts, woodland coppice and ponds.

The Management Plan consultation highlighted the need for robust policies and regulation to protect designated sites. There were, however, comments that more should be done beyond designated sites, including opportunities to adapt to climate change and link habitats. The fragmentation and general decline in traditional land management practices has led to a tremendous pressure on maintaining the rich biodiversity of the Surrey Hills. There is often little public awareness and understanding of the need for appropriate management, particularly grazing, and there is a general lack of resources to coordinate and implement positive management regimes.

Wetland habitats are important to the overall ecology of the AONB and the Wey and Mole and their tributaries are significant landscape features. Catchment partnerships for both river catchments have been working towards meeting Water Framework Directive targets. The partnerships are an important platform that bring together various agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to the management of wetland features. The development of sensitive flood alleviation measures and the implementation of natural flood risk measure on the headwaters of the Pipp Brook on Leith Hill, funded by DEFRA, will be monitored closely.

Additional impetus has been given through efforts directed at reversing the loss of biodiversity nationally as a result of changes to the NPPF (paragraph 170[d]) which includes the principle that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures'. Added to this is the UK's Biodiversity Strategy 'Biodiversity 2020' that sets a target of no net loss of biodiversity by 2020 and the Government's 25 Environment Plan which have led to the current work by DEFRA to introduce a mandatory requirement to deliver biodiversity net gain through the land use planning system.

It is in this context that the Management Plan policies seek to enhance the biodiversity of the area through sustaining the management and extension of the designated sites and important features in the wider AONB landscape. This involves promoting awareness, and generating resources for practical land management through new environmental land management schemes and biodiversity off-setting. There is also the need to ensure collaboration between landowners and land managers, and partner organisations through the Surrey Nature Partnership and farm clusters. Partner local planning authorities will need to ensure that they secure biodiversity improvements when determining planning applications, including within the AONB.

Aim: The biodiversity and water resources of the Surrey Hills are conserved and enhanced

Biodiversity Management Policies:

- B1 Existing designated sites (SSSIs, SPAs and SACs) within the AONB will be conserved, enhanced and managed by partners with the support of Natural England, to ensure that all such sites are brought into or maintained in 'favourable' condition.
- B2 Important habitats, such as chalk grassland and heathland, will be managed and used in ways that conserve and enhance their nature conservation value.
- B3 Opportunities will be taken to restore, extend and link habitats for nature conservation, and educational purposes, with the creation of new habitats and corridors informed by landscape character to establish functional ecological networks with resilience to climate change.
- B4 The enhancement of biodiversity will be maximised through the targeting of advice and grants, and applicants for planning permission will be expected to deliver biodiversity gains as part of their proposals secured through planning conditions or legal agreements where appropriate.
- B5 Measures required to meet Water Framework Directive targets for the river catchments will be supported to conserve and enhance the ecological value of river landscapes, wetland habitats and water quality affecting the environmental quality and landscape of the Surrey Hills.

State of the AONB Indicators for Biodiversity:

- Extent and condition of designated areas (SSSI, SAC, SPA, RIGS, SNCI)
- Extent and condition of habitats of principal importance as listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

2.7 Cultural Heritage

The beautiful landscape features of the Surrey Hills, particularly the historic buildings, settlements, country lanes, hedgerows, parkland, commons, heath and downland, provide evidence of a rich historic and cultural past. This is a landscape that has provided inspiration to many of the country's great artists, writers, designers and architects, particularly during and since Victorian times. Village greens and commons are highly favoured recreational areas for local people and visitors alike.

The consultation on the Management Plan highlighted a general sense that the historic and cultural heritage of the Surrey Hills is greatly under appreciated, particularly the artistic associations and industrial heritage. There is a lack of awareness of how the landscape has evolved and the inspiration that it has provided. There has also been a general loss of local distinctiveness and traditional rural character through the decline in traditional land management practices and the standardisation of design and materials.

The Management Plan seeks to ensure that the historic features and the rich cultural heritage that define the special sense of place are recorded, protected, managed and celebrated by present and future generations. The Delivery Strategy identifies the need for partnership working, including the many local history societies that keep local history alive, the Surrey Hills Society and the Surrey Archaeological Society with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Aim: The cultural heritage that defines the distinctive sense of place within the Surrey Hills is recorded, protected, managed and celebrated

Cultural Heritage Management Policies:

- HC1 A historic perspective of how the AONB landscape has evolved will be promoted, including its traditions, industries, buildings and settlement patterns.
- HC2 Heritage assets, including historic buildings, archaeological sites and historic parks and gardens, will be conserved, managed and recorded.
- HC3 Development proposals will have due regard to the locally distinctive character of rural settlements and the setting of historic buildings.
- HC4 The rich artistic traditions of the Surrey Hills will be promoted. New artistic interpretations of the landscape and its heritage will be commissioned with the involvement of local communities.

State of the AONB Indicators for Cultural Heritage:

- Number and condition of registered historic parks and gardens, and local historic gardens and historic landscapes of interest.
- Number (%) of listed buildings "at risk"

2.8 Recreation, Health and Wellbeing

Some of the most familiar beauty spots in England are found within the Surrey Hills, including Box Hill, Leith Hill and the Devil's Punch Bowl. With the North Downs Way National Trail and the extensive rights of way, open commons, sunken lanes, easy access trails, picnic sites, attractive market towns and villages, it has been a favourite playground for local people and visitors keen to enjoy the fresh air and outstanding scenery.

Although little information exists about the current number and profile of visitors, there is little doubt that the area receives millions of day visitors every year. The consultation on the Management Plan highlighted the conflict between promoting the Surrey Hills as a national asset against the primary purpose of the designation to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Visitors can place a great strain on the area and can lead to conflict between users and local communities, particularly ones with popular village greens such as Tilford and Abinger. Visitors may also add to the congestion of traffic and increase the erosion of footpaths and bridleways as well as the peace and tranquillity of the area.

The Management Plan seeks to recognise that the Surrey Hills, as a nationally important landscape is managed so that local people and visitors have the opportunity to enjoy the area in a way that has minimal impact on its beauty and the lives of its residents. There is the opportunity for Surrey Hills Enterprises and tourism partnerships, such as Visit Surrey and the National Trails' Great Walks project, to ensure that the spending power of visitors contributes significantly to the local economy. This includes linking local food to tourism, and ensuring that visitor facilities enhance local people's enjoyment and understanding of the Surrey Hills AONB.

Aim: The Surrey Hills will be enjoyed and cherished as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for its own intrinsic qualities and in ways that contribute to people's health and wellbeing

Recreation, Health and Wellbeing Management Plan Policies:

- RT1 Visitors and facilities that enhance people's health, enjoyment and understanding of the Surrey Hills will be encouraged, whilst conserving or enhancing the landscape character and biodiversity.
- RT2 Information will be made accessible for a diverse range of potential visitors in order to foster a greater understanding and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills AONB
- RT3 Significant viewpoints and vistas will be identified, conserved and enhanced.
- RT4 The design and development of new visitor facilities, and the maintenance of existing facilities, will have regard to the needs of people of all abilities to access and enjoy the Surrey Hills landscape.

State of the AONB Indicators for Recreation, Health and Wellbeing:

- Number and range of high quality access opportunities that meet the needs of all users
- Monitoring the impact of the Inspiring Views programme

2.9 Planning

The prime purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural and scenic beauty of the landscape. A fundamental role of the local planning authorities is to ensure that the very features that make the Surrey Hills special and worthy of its AONB designation are protected. This is achieved by strict development plan policies and through the vigilant exercise of development management powers. This Plan seeks to ensure that both are applied in a consistent manner across the AONB. Development proposals should take into account any Landscape Character Assessments for the locality and the Surrey Hills publication "Building in Design".

London and the South East's economic success, combined with the attractive environment of the Surrey Hills, creates substantial demand for development that is constrained by environmental restrictions. These pressures are expected to increase and justify especially stringent controls of development. The cumulative effects of many, often small, developments over decades and centuries would reduce the landscape and scenic beauty of the Surrey Hills and spoil it for future generations. These and other pressures and threats outlined in Section 1.8 are considered to justify the policies below for strict controls of development in this most sensitive of landscapes.

The increasing impact of replacement buildings in parts of the Surrey Hills is an issue. Special care needs to be taken over their siting, volume and design to ensure that their impact on the landscape does not become progressively greater over the years and takes into account any previous building enlargement. Similarly, the conversion of farm buildings to other uses can often individually and collectively spoil the landscape. Some such buildings are unattractive but met functional agricultural needs. The retention through conversion can detract from the landscape and no longer be justified for land management purposes.

To mitigate the visual impact of a development in the AONB that has been justified, effective landscaping and tree screening of native species can render the proposal acceptable. Where appropriate a condition should be applied to the permission to provide for the long term retention of the tree screening. Farmland in the Surrey Hills has diminished, often going to equestrian uses, yet it is important to conserving landscape character. Consequently development resulting in the loss of agricultural land will be resisted. To avoid proposed developments in remote locations causing light pollution, large areas of glazing and roof lights should be avoided without automatic blinds or shutters being operative in times of darkness and poor light. Any necessary external lighting will normally be resisted but where special circumstances exist it should be designed to minimize light pollution.

In seeking to identify in development plans sufficient land to meet Councils' future housing requirements, any proposed housing land allocations impacting upon the AONB should be avoided and be shown to be a last resort. Any such proposals will need to demonstrate that other sites have been investigated but would have greater adverse effects on the public interest.

Aim: New development enhances local character and the environmental quality of its nationally important setting

Planning Management Policies:

- LU1 In balancing different considerations associated with determining planning applications and development plan land allocations, great weight will be attached to any adverse impact that a development proposal would have on the amenity, landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and the need for its enhancement.
- LU2 Development will respect the special landscape character of the locality, giving particular attention to potential impacts on ridgelines, public views and tranquility. The proposed use and colour of external building materials will be strictly controlled to harmonize within their related landscape and particularly to avoid buildings being incongruous. In remoter locations, with darker skies, development proposals causing light pollution will be resisted.
- LU3 Development proposals will be required to be of high quality design, respecting local distinctiveness and complementary in form, setting, and scale with their surroundings, and should take any opportunities to enhance their setting.
- LU4 Proposals that would assist in the continuation of direct agricultural and forestry businesses or benefit the social and economic well-being of residents, including small scale affordable housing, will be supported, providing they do not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing the beauty of the landscape.
- LU5 Proposals to redevelop or convert farm buildings that would render the associated farmed landscape unviable will be resisted
- LU6 Development that would spoil the setting of the AONB by harming public views into or from the AONB will be resisted.

State of the AONB Indicators for Land Use Planning:

- Any changes in development impact on the landscape and area under built development

2.10 Transport and Traffic

The Surrey Hills has historically been an accessible landscape well served by rail, road and an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. Many of the important and distinctive features of the Surrey Hills are associated with transport. These include sunken lanes, traditional signs, boundary walls and fences, and the general use of local materials, such as ironstone paving and sandstone kerbs.

As Surrey has a higher level of car ownership than any other county, the impact of traffic on the Surrey Hills is perhaps greater than on any other AONB or National Park. This is largely due to its close proximity to London and other urban areas, resulting in high volumes of traffic passing through the area. The consultation on the Management Plan highlighted the blight caused by major transport infrastructure such as the M25 and M23, and also highlighted that the Surrey Hills has become a key destination for cycling. The increasing volume of traffic leads to a loss of tranquillity, damage to features such as verges, and the introduction of highway engineering solutions that can detract from the rural character of the area. The relatively high car ownership contrasts with a lack of convenient public and community transport.

The Management Plan aims to raise awareness of the impact that traffic has on the Surrey Hills and to promote measures that reinforce the rural character of the area through sensitive design and maintenance. Working with local communities in the AONB, the County Council has implemented schemes to declutter transport infrastructure assisted by a more flexible approach to the provision of highway signage introduced with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. These projects also seek opportunities to enhance the wider environment in villages in ways that reinforce local character and reduce the impact of road traffic. There is also a need to provide safe and convenient non-motorised access by working with rail and bus operators and through initiatives to promote walking, cycling and horse riding for people who live in, work in or visit the Surrey Hills.

Transport routes can also act as important green corridors, linking habitats and promoting biodiversity. Sensitive verge management required the cooperation of a range of partners and the application of good practice pioneered in other parts of the country, notably the County of Devon.

Aim: Transport measures reinforce the rural character of the area and provide for a range of safe and sustainable travel alternatives

Traffic and Transport Management Policies:

- TT1 Measures to ensure opportunities for all members of society to access the Surrey Hills will be supported.
- TT2 The impact of development proposals on the surrounding Surrey Hills road network, including any highway mitigation measures, will be given great weight when assessing the acceptability of the development.
- TT3 Design and enhancement of the rural road network will conserve and enhance the AONB to influence the behaviour of road users for public safety and enjoyment.
- TT4 Transport infrastructure and associated landscaping, including verge management, will respect and enhance the local landscape quality, character and biodiversity

TT5 Major transport infrastructure will have due regard to the AONB designation.
Measures will need to be taken to integrate it into the Surrey Hills landscape.

State of the AONB Indicators for Traffic and Transport:

- Type, amount and quality of road signs, kerbs and road furniture
- Area of road verge managed positively for biodiversity

2.11 The Economy, Tourism and Community Development

The Surrey Hills AONB is a major economic asset to the County and the Region. The quality of the landscape contributes to the economic success of the region as a place to live, work and invest. Being a generally prosperous and attractive area means high land and property values often undermine the viability of rural businesses such as farming and village shops by making staff recruitment difficult. These businesses help maintain the landscape and community life. GLOVER CAPITAL

A Defra study (2013 unpublished), by Professor Peter Bibby of the University of Sheffield, has identified the Surrey Hills as an "Elite Residential Enclave" 43.1% of dwellings in the AONB having a registered company director in residence. This relative prosperity creates major issues relating to affordable housing and means that local people who do not have access to everyday facilities, jobs or a car can be excluded from participating fully in community life.

The AONB Management Plan seeks to ensure that the protection and enhancement of the environmental quality of the AONB leads to the Surrey Hills being an attractive place to live in, invest in and visit for all members of the community. Particular regard needs to be given to promoting those sustainable forms of social and economic development, such as sustainable tourism, affordable housing and the development of local food initiatives, which in themselves contribute to conserving the environment by generating income for land management and a reduction in the need to travel. The work of Surrey Hills Enterprises in promoting and marketing high quality local businesses and products will be supported.

Aim: The Surrey Hills is an attractive and sustainable place to live, work and invest

The Economy, Tourism and Community Development Policies:

- CE1 The Surrey Hills will be promoted as a destination for sustainable tourism and recreation.
- CE2 Initiatives that promote and market high quality Surrey Hills produce and services will be supported.
- CE3 The provision and retention of affordable housing for local people and key workers will be supported.
- CE4 Initiatives that result in affordable and reliable community transport and infrastructure for recreation, employment and access to local services will be supported.
- CE5 Opportunities to develop land management and conservation skills through vocational training, volunteer work and paid employment will be identified and actively promoted.
- CE6 Greater awareness of the Surrey Hills AONB will be supported to foster a pride of place that encourages community action to protect, enhance and enjoy its landscape.

State of AONB Indicators for Community Development & Local Economy:

- Community involvement and awareness in the conservation and enhancement of the AONB
- Number and access to community transport schemes

SECTION 3: THE DELIVERY STRATEGY

3.1 Introduction

It is intended that the policies set out in the AONB Management Plan will be embraced and acted upon by all those organisations that have a role to play in the management of the Surrey Hills landscape and the wellbeing of its local communities. This includes landowners, voluntary organisations, interest groups, local authorities, parish councils, statutory agencies, regional Local Enterprise Partnerships and Government departments.

It is recognised that many ongoing activities of partners already help to contribute to the Management Plan policies. This section of the AONB Management Plan, however, provides a strategy that identifies specific opportunities for partners to work together to help translate their commitment to the vision and policies into practical action.

3.2 The Surrey Hills AONB Board

The Surrey Hills AONB Board is a Joint Committee that leads on the preparation, monitoring and review of the AONB Management Plan on behalf of its constituent bodies and other partner organisations. The AONB Board also plays a leading role in developing an image and sense of identity for the Surrey Hills AONB, and developing and supporting initiatives that implement the AONB Management Plan policies.

The work of the AONB Board is achieved through the Surrey Hills AONB Unit taking forward a range of initiatives that promote the special character of the Surrey Hills, establish partnerships, secure funding, ensure implementation and monitor effectiveness. In recognition that the Surrey Hills AONB is a nationally important landscape, 75% of the Unit's core costs are funded by central government through DEFRA with 25% of core costs from the six local authorities to reflect their statutory responsibilities towards the AONB.

3.3 The National Association for AONBs

The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK's 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Its objectives are to

- promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs,
- advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and
- promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs, other protected areas and those areas for which designation might be pursued.

It does this by taking a collaborative and partnership-based approach to working with its membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals.

The Association is involved in the planning and management of around 8,000 square miles of outstanding and cherished landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Membership includes most of the AONB partnerships, as well as some of those Local Authorities with statutory responsibility for AONBs, together with a number of voluntary organisations.

3.4 Surrey Hills AONB Family

Although the fundamental purpose of the Management Plan will be to encourage co-ordinated action by all organisations, agencies and individuals, over the last five years the Surrey Hills AONB Board has established a Surrey Hills group of organisations (the Surrey Hills Family) to help support the delivery of the AONB Management Plan. The driver has been the recognition that Government funding is heavily constrained, so working collaboratively through the family provides an opportunity to diversify and broaden the resource base, including access to skills, funding and volunteering.

The Surrey Hills Family includes the Surrey Hills AONB Board, serviced by the AONB Unit, working collaboratively with the following organisations:

- **Surrey Hills Enterprises:** This Community Interest Company's mission is to promote the Surrey Hills as a national asset for the benefit of local businesses in order to enhance our community and conserve our unique heritage. Controlled by a Board of Directors, including representatives of the AONB Board, it organises events and offers membership to commercial partners under a licence agreement with Surrey County Council on behalf of the Surrey Hills AONB Board. Through the award of The Trademark, the businesses become ambassadors for the Surrey Hills.
- **Surrey Hills Society:** This charity is a membership organisation established to recruit and inform individuals with an interest in the Surrey Hills by running a range of walks, talks and projects that enhance the public's understanding and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills.
- **Surrey Hills Trust Fund:** This is a dedicated fund established under the umbrella of The Community Foundation for Surrey to attract donations from individuals and companies to ensure the continued success in implementing the aims of the AONB Management Plan. Where development proposals would cause harm to the AONB, in spite of any avoidance or mitigation measures, but the decision maker considers such development should be permitted in the public interest, this charitable fund provides the opportunity for those progressing them to make a voluntary contribution towards measures to enhance parts of the AONB. This contributions is designed to offset, to a degree, the harm caused. Any offer to contribute will not be taken into account in the determination of a planning application.

3.6 The Surrey Hills Brand

Although the Surrey Hills as a designated landscape and place name cannot be protected, the Surrey Hills AONB Board has developed an emblem for the Surrey Hills that has been protected by Surrey County Council as a trademark. What unites the Surrey Hills Family is that they all have a legal requirement to benefit the Surrey Hills and have use of the Surrey Hills trademark. They share the brand vision:

“Creating a legacy for the Surrey Hills”

The Brand Values are:

Passionate, Energetic, Enterprising, Creative and Collaborative

These brand values need to be reflected throughout all AONB activities in order to build understanding and to protect its reputation. The Surrey Hills brand needs to be used consistently by the Surrey Hills family. This is achieved through the Surrey Hills Marketing

Group to provide a synergy across the Surrey Hills Family in developing and protecting the integrity of the Surrey Hills brand.

3.7 Strategic Targets

With the continued constraints in public financing, the Delivery Strategy seeks to reduce the reliance on public funding. This will be achieved by growing the membership and activities of the Society, growing the business sector's involvement and revenue streams through Surrey Hills Enterprises and generating income through the Surrey Hills Trust Fund in support of the implementation of the AONB Management Plan. A Surrey Hills Family Delivery Plan will detail how the strategic objectives set out in the AONB Management Plan will be delivered.

The strategic targets identified for the next five years are themed under the following pillars:

3.7.1 Pillar 1. Planning

- Influence planning policy and decisions by advising on the preparation of Local Plans and developments affecting the AONB
- Raise awareness among the public and relevant bodies of the pressures on the Surrey Hills and the need for tight controls on development through a variety of channels including the Surrey Hills Newsletter
- Support Natural England in the process of the AONB Boundary Review

3.7.2 Pillar 2. Landscape Conservation and Enhancement

- Support the DEFRA family to test and trail new approaches to Environmental Land Management to ensure more, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, with no net loss of priority habitat and an increase in the overall extent of priority habitats
- Support the development and extension of Farm Clusters across the Surrey Hills, including Greenscapes and the North Downs Facilitation Groups/
- Work with the Surrey Nature Partnership to enhanced wildlife habitats with 90% of priority habitats in favourable or recovering condition and at least 50% of SSSIs in favourable condition, while maintaining at least 95% in favourable or recovering condition.
- Reduce the impact of overhead lines in the Surrey Hills by implementing schemes with SSE and UK Power Networks
- Develop best practice and support schemes that promote and reinforce the rural character of the Surrey Hills country lanes and villages

3.7.3 Pillar 3. Access, Enjoyment and Understanding

- Develop and extend the Cycle and Equestrian Surrey Hills programmes.
- Establish the Surrey Hills Access Fund, with the Surrey Hills Society and Community Foundation for Surrey, to secure investment into countryside access and support for volunteers.
- Inspire and engage new audiences through the Surrey Hills Arts programme, including delivering Surrey Unearthed, events, new work and creative health walks.
- Develop an Inspiring Views programme to open up and maintain up to two important views per annum to and from the Surrey Hills AONB.

- Increase the membership, profile, events programmes and volunteering opportunities through the Surrey Hills Society with a target of 2,000 members by 2025.
- Support the governance arrangements for the North Downs Way National Trail and help to deliver the Pilgrimage and Great Walks of England programme.
- Deliver the Forgotten Landscapes HLF to raise awareness and understanding of medieval settlements and how they have shaped the contemporary landscape.
- Support the annual Surrey Hills Challenge and Festival of Sport at Denbies as an opportunity to promote the Surrey Hills Trust Fund and shared use and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills.
- Increase attendance at the Surrey Hills Wood Fair to over 5000 visitors per annum to promote awareness of woodland management issues and rural business.

3.7.4 Pillar 4. Growing the Surrey Hills Economy

- Support the development of Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC to increase its membership (target no of members and income/).
- Help secure the continuation of a Surrey Rural LEADER programme to benefit the economy of the Surrey Hills area.
- Maximise the benefits of rural tourism in partnership with Visit Surrey, regional and national tourism bodies.
- Develop relationship and investment opportunities through Local Enterprise Partnerships including Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3.

3.7.5 Pillar 5 Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination

- Ensure sound governance, reporting and monitoring of the AONB Management Plan through quarterly meetings of the Surrey Hills AONB Board.
- Develop the Surrey Hills Trust Fund with the Community Foundation for Surrey with a target of £100k through flow project funding per annum and £500k endowment by 2025.
- Organise an annual Surrey Hills Partnership as an opportunity to oversee and scrutinise the work of the Surrey Hills family.
- Establish a revised constitution for the Surrey Hills AONB Board and secure funding support from DEFRA and local authority partners by 2025.
- Review the AONB Management Plan and deliver a new Management Plan for adoption by 2025.
- Develop policy and strategy with central and local government through active membership of the NAAONB attending Conference and AGM.
- Establish a methodology and a baseline by 2025 to monitor landscape change to help identify the types of change taking place and how these are affecting the landscape character and natural beauty of the Surrey Hills AONB.

3.8 Monitoring implementation of the AONB Management Plan

The Surrey Hills AONB Board will take the lead in monitoring the implementation of the Plan. This will be achieved by establishing a monitoring mechanism for partners to report on the extent to which the Management Plan targets have been met. This will provide the basis for the assessment as to the effect they have in conserving and enhancing the AONB landscape and the enjoyment and understanding of it. The Surrey Hills Board will keep under review the Delivery Strategy, publish quarterly e-bulletins on progress and publish an annual report

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: n/a

Report of Director of Environment

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Date: 22 October 2019

Replacement of Dial a Ride mini buses

Executive Summary

The Council's Dial a Ride (DAR) mini buses are approaching five years of age and the Community Care Service has asked us to review replacement options.

We have looked at three options:

1. Replace with a new electric fleet
2. Replace "like for like"
3. Delay replacement of the fleet for 2-3 years

The conclusion reached is that electric vehicles provide a beneficial environmental solution at an affordable financial cost.

Recommendation to Executive

- (1) That Option 1 – the proposed purchase of ten new electric Mini Buses for the DAR service – be approved.
- (2) That the transfer of £820,000 from the provisional to the approved capital programme, be approved.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To ensure an up to date and reliable fleet for this service and reduce the Council's vehicle emissions.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Executive with the information necessary for it to review the options available in relation to the replacement of the Council's DAR fleet.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 This proposal contributes towards a sustainable local environment by the use of non-polluting electric vehicles for one of the Council's front-line services. We calculate there

will be a reduction of CO2 emissions from fuel of 52,400kg per year (or 366,800kg CO2 over the life of the vehicles). There would be an improvement in air quality and a positive impact on the Council's reputation.

3. Background and Issues

- 3.1 The ten DAR minibuses are approaching five years of age and this is the earliest point we would consider replacement. At five years, in good condition, we would expect a high resale value. After this time reliability and value will decline.
- 3.2 The Service would like to introduce fully electric vehicles. Following market research, we have identified new electric vehicles that we believe could replace the current diesel-powered vehicles. The procurement and build process would take approximately one year.
- 3.3 Diesel vehicles are cheaper to purchase but electric vehicles are cheaper to run. The cost of a new diesel minibus is approximately £50,000 compared to an electric minibus at approximately £79,000. There is a further cost of £30,000 required to be spent on charging infrastructure. In total, a fleet of ten DAR vehicles with charging infrastructure would cost an additional £320,000 to purchase.
- 3.4 However, when the cost of fuel and servicing for the diesel variant over the life of the vehicle is taken into account, the cost difference reduces significantly. For example, at an annual mileage of 13,000 miles, a diesel-powered vehicle would cost £2,400 to fuel. An equivalent electric powered vehicle would cost £400 to cover the same distance. This saving of £2,000 per vehicle, per year plus other savings on road tax, servicing and maintenance means that the operating cost of an electric fleet will be around £187,000 less over a seven-year life. This produces a net additional cost of £133,000 over a 7-year life (£1,900 per vehicle per year).

The calculations are set out in table 1 below:

Table 1 – comparison of diesel versus electric DAR minibus replacement

| | Option 1 (Electric) £ | Option 2 (Diesel) £ |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Purchase cost | 790,000 | 500,000 |
| Fuel | 28,000 | 168,000 |
| Infrastructure | 30,000 | Nil |
| Servicing | 5,000 | 30,000 |
| Road fund licence | Nil | 22,000 |
| Total Over 7 Years | 853,000 | 720,000 |
| Additional cost per year of electric fleet | £19,000 or £1,900 per vehicle | |

- 3.5 The average daily mileage of our minibuses is 50 miles, which means we would not need to charge the buses every day. This, along with multiple charging options available on the Council's property estate means the risk of services being affected by loss of power is low.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 This electric fleet option has been developed in collaboration with the Community Care Services Manager

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 This duty has been considered in the context of this report and it has been concluded that there are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Option 1 – There are increased capital costs of around £320,000 associated with the purchase of electric vehicles over conventional diesel models. These include the vehicle purchase price and installation of charging infrastructure. However, we anticipate operational savings on fuel and servicing of approximately £187,000 over the 7-year expected life of the vehicles. This means that the net additional costs of moving to this approach are in the region of £19,000 per year for the fleet of ten mini buses.
- 6.2 Option 2 – Replacing the fleet like for like is the “as is” model and would be in line with current and medium-term financial projections.
- 6.3 Option 3 – Extending the life of the current fleet is possible and at five years old this is the earliest we would generally consider replacing a fleet. It is not unusual for a fleet like this to last reliably for at least seven years; however, the operating costs of the fleet are likely to increase, and reliability and residual values will decline. Offset against this would be the benefits of delaying a purchase and the related savings of interest on the capital required to replace the fleet. However, if we decide to delay replacement, we would expect the total fleet operating costs for the next two years to be broadly in line with existing budgets. There will still be a need to replace this fleet within 2-3 years.
- 6.4 If Option 1 is agreed, we will apply for funding support from the Salix fund. This fund provides interest free loans for energy efficiency projects and is available to all public sector organisations including schools and academies, higher and further educational institutions, emergency services, hospitals, leisure centres, local authorities and the NHS. Early discussions with Salix have received positive feedback and an indication that we are likely to be successful in attracting interest free capital funding of approximately £170,000.
- 6.5 We anticipate a capital receipt for the existing fleet when we replace them. This is likely to generate between £100,000 and £150,000. Capital receipts from vehicle sales are returned to our capital fund to reduce the need for future borrowing. This capital receipt along with the likely Salix funding actually means that in the event of Option 1 being approved the majority of extra capital investment needed for an EV fleet would come from capital receipts and an interest free loan, rather than from increased borrowing.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 Procurement of the vehicles will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules.

8. Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 There will be a need to undertake some training due to the change in vehicle and driving style needed to maximise the benefits and range of an electric vehicle.

9. Summary of Options

- 9.1 Option 1 - replace current fleet of buses with new Electric vehicles
Option 2 - replace current fleet of buses with new Diesel vehicles
Option 3 - delay replacement of the fleet for 2-3 years

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 There are environmental benefits from procuring electric vehicles. These include a reduction in CO2 emissions from fuel of 52,400kg per year (or 366,800kg CO2 over the life of the vehicles). There would be an improvement in air quality and a positive impact on the Council's reputation.
- 10.2 There are infrastructure costs involved with the transition to electric vehicles. Although this cost will need to be met at some point in the near future in any case with the planned removal of purely fossil-fuelled vehicles from the market by 2040. The infrastructure can be used for other electric vehicles purchased in the future.
- 10.3 Option 1 is financially more expensive, but it is affordable, especially as Salix funding and capital receipts will significantly reduce the additional borrowing requirement. We are conscious that the price gap between conventional and electrically powered vehicles is likely to narrow over time so a delay on financial grounds is possible, but the investment will be necessary at some point in the near future. So, we can delay (Option 3), using the existing fleet, for a further 2-3 years but must replace the fleet within three years to minimise any risk to service delivery.
- 10.4 Option 2 would effectively commit the Council to at least five more years of diesel power for this fleet and given the speed of change in the industry and the Council's commitment to reducing our emissions, this would be the least optimal choice.
- 10.4 On balance, the climate change contribution and setting a strong positive example are important factors when stacked against the additional costs. Option 1 is therefore recommended.

11. Background Papers

None

12. Appendices

None

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Holy Trinity

Report of Director of Community Services

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Date: 22 October 2019

Rodboro Buildings – Electric Theatre through road and parking

Executive Summary

At its meeting of 23 January 2018, the Executive agreed, subject to Council approving the budget on 7 February 2018, to include the sum of £450,000 in the General Fund Capital Programme provisional list for a scheme to improve the area around the Rodboro Buildings and the northern side of the Electric Theatre. Council approved the budget and this report asks the Executive to approve the transfer of the sum referred to in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION Appendix 2 to this report from the provisional to the approved Capital Programme to enable this scheme to be implemented. The scheme addresses pedestrian safety concerns as well as enhancing the area.

Recommendation to Executive

That the sum referred to in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION Appendix 2 to this report be transferred from the General Fund Capital Programme provisional list to the approved list, subject to the scheme receiving planning permission.

Reason for Recommendation:

To enable the Rodboro Buildings- Electric Theatre through road and parking scheme outlined in this report to be implemented.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To ask the Executive to approve the transfer of appropriate funding from the General Fund Capital Programme provisional list to the approved list to enable the scheme described in this report to proceed.

2. Strategic Priorities

- 2.1 This scheme supports the Fundamental Theme of Place Making, in particular the strategic priority of regenerating and improving Guildford town centre and other urban areas.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council owns a parcel of land in the centre of the gyratory system comprising the following buildings:

- Armour Buildings let on a 25 year lease from 1998 to Stonegate Pub Company; trading as Popworld
- Rodboro Buildings let on a 25 year lease from 1998 to J. D. Wetherspoon Ltd. and another 25 year lease to Academy Music Services Ltd. (ACM Commercial Ltd.)
- The Electric Theatre (let to ACM Commercial Ltd.) on a 20 year lease from 2017.

- 3.2 Since the late 1990s when the area was last improved there has been a large increase in pedestrian and vehicle movements. This has led officers to be concerned about the safety of pedestrians using the area. The proposed scheme will provide safer vehicle and pedestrian segregation and generally improve the look of the area, and areas prone to anti-social behaviour will be designed out.

- 3.3 Currently, there are numerous waste bins and storage areas in various places throughout the area which, unshielded from view, makes the area visually unappealing and uncontained resulting in litter on the pavements and road. A central waste and storage area will be created to rationalise bins and stop overspill. This was an area of concern for tenants during consultation.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 Officers have consulted with representatives of the organisations set out in paragraph 3.1 and their comments have been noted and incorporated in the proposed scheme.
- 4.2 Officers also consulted with the Council's Design and Conservation Team and Parking Services as well as Surrey County Council Highways on matters such as disabled parking provision, access and egress onto the gyratory, materials and local Conservation Area considerations.

5. Description of scheme

- 5.1 Appendix 1 contains a plan of the proposed scheme, which includes a reduced width roadway encouraging one-way traffic, a repositioned loading bay for deliveries, new bin stores for the Council's tenants, new footways, pedestrianised areas and road crossings. It also retains the outdoor seating area leased to Wetherspoon's and a single disabled parking bay. The existing bollards will be removed and new ones

included only where deemed necessary to keep pedestrians safe from vehicles being driven onto pavements.

- 5.2 For the most part, the scheme retains the existing highway surface. Damaged areas of paving in the vehicle areas will be replaced using the same material we have in stock. Pedestrian and vehicle areas will be delineated by new kerbing.
- 5.3 The footway areas specifically for pedestrians will be re-paved in a material of a contrasting colour to encourage a 'hierarchy' of users, pedestrians over vehicles, to be maintained.
- 5.4 The proposed materials are of durable quality, 'off the shelf' that are easy to source for future maintenance.

6. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The Equality Impact Assessment shows there to be a low overall impact on grounds of equality and diversity. It identifies a differential impact on one protected group, persons who have a disability, due to the removal of one of the two disabled parking spaces. The scheme necessitates the loss of one space in order to accommodate segregated vehicular and pedestrian areas plus widened footways. One disabled space is to remain, and there are disabled parking spaces in nearby car parks, and Blue Badge holders can park free in any pay and display car park.
- 6.2 Officers have liaised with the Guildford Access Group. The Group's Access Auditor has confirmed that this arrangement represents a satisfactory compromise, i.e. that there is one accessible space within this scheme, together with two existing accessible spaces nearby in the area demised to the Electric Theatre.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Executive agreed to include a sum of £450,000 in the General Fund Capital Programme provisional list allocated to this project at its meeting of 23 January 2018. This was subsequently agreed by Council on 7 February 2018.
- 7.2 Originally, it was assumed that the project would be designed and managed by consultants and the cost for this was included in the submitted bid. It was also assumed that the majority of the paving would have to be replaced. The project is now being delivered in house as requested by the Corporate Management Team. In addition, officers have concluded that the majority of the existing paving can be retained, hence the reduction in the project cost.
- 7.3 The total estimated cost of the scheme, including a breakdown of the cost of each element of the scheme, is set out in the NOT FOR PUBLICATION Appendix 2.
- 7.4 Wetherspoon's and Popworld have agreed that they will contribute 50% of the cost of the bin store, (see total estimated construction costs for the bin store in Appendix 2). The Council will receive some uplift in rental income for the bin store.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 Some of the areas currently demised will alter slightly. This will have to be reflected in revised leases, but this can be done within existing resources.
- 8.2 Appendix 2 is to be treated as exempt from the Access to Information publication rules as it sets out the detail of the estimated cost of each element of the scheme, disclosure of which may adversely affect the tendering process so that competition is undermined. This is deemed to be information exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, which is "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)".
- 8.3 All councillors will be able to access the information contained in Appendix 2.
- 8.4 The exempt information will be available for public inspection following completion of the procurement process.
- 8.5 The decision to maintain the exemption may be challenged by any person at the point at which the Executive is invited to pass a resolution to exclude the public from the meeting to consider the information in Appendix 2.
- 8.6 In accordance with Regulation 5 (2) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the Council published on 24 September 2019 notice of intention to hold part of this meeting in private to discuss, if necessary, the detail of the estimated cost of each element of the scheme referred to in agenda Item 10 above, disclosure of which may adversely affect the tendering process so that competition is undermined. elements.
- 8.7 The notice included a statement setting out the reasons for these matters to be discussed in private and inviting anyone wishing to make representations in relation to holding part of the meeting in private for this purpose to do so by 12 noon on 14 October 2019. No representations were received.
- 8.8 If councillors wish to discuss the information contained in Appendix 2, the Executive is asked to consider passing the following resolution:

"That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting to enable the Executive to discuss the information contained in Appendix 2 to this report on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act."

9. Human Resource Implications

- 9.1 There are no Human Resources implications as a result of this report. The project is being designed and managed by the Council's Corporate Property and Engineering teams within existing resources.

10. Summary of Options

- 10.1 There are two options; one, do nothing, or two, approve the transfer of funding to proceed with this scheme.
- 10.2 The 'do nothing' option would not address pedestrian safety concerns and would not enhance this area of the town. The second option to approve the transfer of funding to proceed with this scheme is recommended.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 This scheme will address safety concerns over pedestrian/vehicle movement and enhance the public realm in this area of the town.

12. Background Papers

None

13. Appendices

Appendix 1: Layout plan
Appendix 2: Estimate of costs (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda item number: 10
Appendix 2

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