

EXECUTIVE

- * Councillor Caroline Reeves (Chairman)
- * Councillor Fiona White (Vice-Chairman)

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| * 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, Dennis Booth, John Redpath, Maddie Redpath, Deborah Seabrook, and Patrick Sheard were also in attendance.

EX52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor James Steel.

Councillors Angela Gunning, Dennis Booth, John Redpath, Maddie Redpath, Deborah Seabrook, and Patrick Sheard were also in attendance.

EX53 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT - DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

Councillors Fiona White and Pauline Searle disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in that they both lived in parished areas (Agenda item 6).

EX54 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

EX55 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council announced that the consultation responses received regarding Chantry Wood campsite would be given full consideration and there would be a further review.

EX56 REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES

The Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) introduced the IRP's report and set out the Panel's main recommendations. Credit was given to the previous IRP report submitted in 2016, which was described as a comprehensive review with sound recommendations. For this reason, the new report submitted to the Executive built on that previous formula and approach for setting the Basic Allowance.

With regard to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs), the IRP had built upon the 2016 framework with the Leader's Allowance represented as a percentage of the Basic Allowance and subsequent SRA's presented as a percentage of the Leader's Allowance. The changes from 2016 were described as limited. There were two new SRAs proposed in the report in recognition of the new roles of Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Guildford Joint Committee. In adherence to good practice set by Government it was proposed that no more than fifty per cent of councillors should be in receipt of an SRA and that no councillor should be in receipt of more than one SRA at one time.

It was also proposed that the Dependant's Carer's Allowance should be split to recognise specialist care requirements and a recommendation for support for a parental leave policy so that a councillor might continue to receive a basic allowance for up to six months (with adherence to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of attendance at meetings) enabling the allowance scheme to act as an incentive to councillors and prospective councillors and not a barrier.

Having considered the report, and having regard to the IRP's recommendations, the Executive

RECOMMEND: That the Council be requested to consider the following recommendations:

- (1) That the Basic Allowance payable to all members of Guildford Borough Council be £7,405 per annum.
- (2) That no councillor shall be entitled to receive at any given time more than one Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA), except in circumstances where a councillor in receipt of an SRA is also entitled to receive the Group Leader's SRA, and that this 'One SRA Only Rule' be adopted into the Scheme of Allowances.
- (3) That the maximum number of recipients of SRAs at any one time does not exceed 50% of Council Members (24 Members)
- (4) That the Leader of the Council continues to receive an SRA of 200% of the basic allowance, £14,810 per annum.
- (5) That the Deputy Leader receives an SRA of 50% of the Leader's SRA, £7,405 per annum.
- (6) That the Members of the Executive, the Chair of the Planning Committee, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Mayor receive an SR A of 40% of the Leader's SRA, £5,924 per annum.
- (7) That the Shadow Leader's SRA be withdrawn.
- (8) That the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, the Deputy Mayor, the Chairman of the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee, the Chairs of the Executive Advisory Boards and the Guildford Joint Committee Chair each receive an S RA of 25% of the Leader's SRA, £3,703 per annum.
- (9) That the Vice Chair of the Guildford Joint Committee receive an SR A of 10% of the Leader's SRA, £1,481 per annum.
- (10) That the Chairs of the Licensing Sub-Committees continue to be eligible to receive an SRA on a per meeting basis, currently £280 per meeting
- (11) That Political Group Leaders continue to receive an SRA of 1% of the Basic Allowance per group member (£74 per councillor per annum).
- (12) That the role of Deputy Lead Councillor should not be awarded an S RA.
- (13) That co-optees continue to receive an allowance of 2.5% of the Leader's SRA, £370 per annum.
- (14) That Travelling and Subsistence Allowance should continue to be payable to councillors and co-opted members in connection with any approved duties.
- (15) That the amounts payable in respect of Travelling and Subsistence Allowance should continue to be the amounts which are payable to officers of the Council for travelling and subsistence undertaken in the course of their duties.
- (16) That Councillors should also be permitted to claim for reimbursement of any reasonable parking charges incurred whilst on approved duties.
- (17) That the Dependants' Carers' Allowance should be based on two rates. Rate one for general care be at a rate of £10.58 per hour, with no monthly maximum claim. Rate two should be for specialist care based at cost upon production of receipts and requiring medical evidence that this type of care is required.

- (18) That no change should be made to the current eligibility conditions for receipt of the Dependants' Carers' Allowance, except that the duties for which this allowance is payable should be in accordance with the list of approved Councillor duties. The Council should also actively promote the allowance to prospective and new councillors both before and following an election.
- (19) That the level of the Mayor's and the Deputy Mayor's allowances payable under Sections 3 and 5 respectively of the Local Government Act 1972 to meet the expenses of their offices should remain unchanged at £8,000 and £2,000 per annum respectively.
- (20) That the recommended duties for which Dependants' Carers' Allowance and Travelling and Subsistence Allowance should be payable should be amended to include councillor ward and constituency activities including attendance at ward surgeries.
- (21) That the Council considers the introduction of a policy to support parental leave for councillors as outlined in the Panel's report.
- (22) That the basic allowance, each of the SRAs, the Co-Optees' Allowance and the Dependants' Carers' Allowance be increased annually in line with the percentage increase in staff salaries until 2023, at which time the Scheme shall be reviewed again by an independent remuneration panel.
- (23) That the new scheme of allowances to be agreed by the Council in December 2019 be implemented with effect from the beginning of the 2020-21 financial year, at which time the current scheme of allowances will be revoked.

Reason:

In order to comply with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).

EX57 PARISH COUNCILS - CONCURRENT FUNCTIONS GRANT AID: APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE 2020-21

The Lead Councillor for Finance, Assets and Customer Service introduced the report.

The Executive was asked to approve the budget for 2020-21 at this time because the parish councils needed to be aware of the level of grant aid available to them so that they could build the sums into their budget calculations for the coming year.

Parishes had been asked to complete a detailed application form and written estimate for each project and identify how the project met with at least one of the three fundamental themes within the Council's corporate plan. There had been 27 requests received from 14 of the 23 parish councils totalling £91,889. A panel of officers had evaluated the bids. The panel had referred any queries raised back to the parish council concerned and obtained satisfactory responses in all cases. Bids brought forward for approval totalled £91,889 which was £1,889 over the base budget of £90,000. It was recommended that the residual balance of £1,889 be met from the Parish Council Urgent Schemes Reserve.

The Executive
RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Concurrent Functions grant aid budget for 2020-21 be approved at £90,000, subject to final confirmation by the Council at its budget meeting in February 2020.
- (2) That the parish council requests for grant aid for 2020-21, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.
- (3) That the remaining balance of £1,889 be met from the Parish Council Urgent Schemes Reserve.

Reasons:

- (1) To assist parish councils with expenditure on concurrent function schemes in 2020-21.
- (2) To enable parish councils to take account of financial assistance from Guildford Borough Council when calculating their precept requirements for 2020-21.

EX58 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020-21

The Council had a statutory duty to consider annually whether to revise its Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme (otherwise known as Council Tax Reduction (CTR)), replace it with another or make no changes at all. The Council was obliged to consult with interested parties if it should wish to revise or replace the scheme. The Council must approve a scheme for the 2020-21 financial year by 31 January 2020, to enable annual bills to be calculated correctly.

The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability introduced the report. It was noted that the existing scheme was working well, but there was an associated piece of work being undertaken to review the impact of the roll-out of Universal Credit. Any changes made by the Council to the scheme could be supplemented by the Discretionary Hardship Fund, but it was stressed that this was not a general fund. The recommended changes made in the report were within the existing revenue budget. Two of the proposed changes were associated with an increase in the cost of living, another concerned the 'Windrush' Compensation Scheme and finally impacts associated with changes to the National Pension Age Scheme. It was noted that Police and Surrey County Council supported the proposed changes. The Lead Councillor for Housing, Access and Disability gave some examples of the implementation of the Scheme and the Hardship Fund.

It was further noted that there would a forthcoming fundamental review of the way in which the consultation process for the Scheme was conducted to ensure that as wide a representation of views as was possible was captured.

Having considered the report, the Executive
RECOMMEND:

- (1) That the current LCTS scheme be amended for 2020-21, as set out in detail in Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Executive, with effect from 1 April 2020.
- (2) That the Council maintains a discretionary hardship fund of £40,000 in 2020-21.

Reasons:

- (1) To ensure that the Council complies (1) with legislation to implement a LCTS scheme from 1 April 2020.
- (2) To maintain a discretionary fund to help applicants suffering from severe financial hardship.

EX59 BUSINESS PLANNING - GENERAL FUND OUTLINE BUDGET 2020-21

The Executive considered an update report on the current position with regard to the preparation of the Outline Budget for 2020-21. The report had covered the following areas:

- Budget assumptions
- Revenue Support Grant and Business Rate Retention Scheme
- Council Tax, tax base and collection fund
- Care Leavers council tax reduction pilot

- New Homes Bonus
- capital expenditure and minimum revenue provision
- use of reserves and interest earnings
- draft outline budget for 2020-21
- Forecasted outturn position for 2019-20

The Joint EAB Budget Task Group and the Joint EAB had considered the outline budget at their meetings held respectively on 8 and 20 November 2019, and a summary of their comments had been circulated to the Executive on the Supplementary Information Sheet.

The report explained that government grant had been included at a level based on the information contained in the 2020-21 Local Government technical consultation document issued on 3 October 2019 but that the amount of grant would not be known for certain until central government released the local government finance settlement which the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had provisionally indicated would be in December 2019. Officers had assumed a £5 (3.0%) increase in Council Tax.

The draft Council Tax base was 57,645.76, which was 1.5% higher than 2019-20. This had increased the resources available by approximately £146,100.

The financial monitoring report for the first six months of 2019-20 had been reported to the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee on 19 November 2019. The projected net expenditure on the General Fund for the current financial year was estimated to be £0.57 million more than the original estimate. One of the factors contributing to the forecasted position in 2019-20 was the costs incurred in respect of planning appeals. The report had requested approval of a supplementary estimate to cover these costs and a supplementary estimate to cover the costs of enforcement action at Stoney Castle, Pirbright.

Having considered the report, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budget assumptions used in the preparation of the 2020-21 outline budget and three year forward projections, be approved.
- (2) That a supplementary estimate of £125,000 to cover the forecasted budget shortfall in respect of planning appeal fees, be approved.
- (3) That a supplementary estimate of £120,000 to cover enforcement costs at Stoney Castle in Pirbright, be approved.
- (4) That the current position on the outline budget for 2020-21 be noted.
- (5) That the proposal to use the Council's various earmarked reserves for specific projects, as set out in section 10 of the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.
- (6) That the pilot 100% council tax reduction for Surrey County Council care leavers for 2020-21 only, be approved.

Reason:

To assist the Executive in the preparation of the General Fund estimates for 2020-21.

EX60 PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS TO CHAPEL LANE, CASTLE STREET AND SWAN LANE, GUILDFORD

Prior to the formal consideration of this matter, the following persons addressed the Executive:

- Bob Bromham (Holy Trinity Amenity Group)
- Matthew Bayliss (South Hill Steering Group)

Both speakers welcomed the review and the proposals but stressed the importance of the safety and priority of pedestrians with Mr Bayliss mentioning in particular the proposals for the area including Sydenham Road, Pewley Hill and South Hill.

Mr Bromham welcomed the pedestrianisation of Chapel Street but felt the levelling of the setts should not be a priority. He was in support of proposed changes to Castle Street but opposed the new road layout at the bottom of South Hill. He asked the Executive to note that pedestrianisation should be a priority following the declaration of a climate emergency.

At its meeting on 8 April 2019, the Executive had agreed to proceed with a public engagement exercise for Guildford town centre public realm improvements from which high-level feasibility design options would be developed. The Executive was asked to consider the outcome of this work and the available options.

The scheme had focused on delivering public realm improvements to the following:

1. Chapel Street
2. Castle Street
3. Swan Lane
4. Pedestrian safety by upgrading existing facilities and introducing new vehicle restrictions to the High Street
5. Signage and Wayfinding to better connect the historic town centre and promote businesses and the cultural offer of Guildford.

The total budget available was £1.3 million which comprised £1.248 million approved capital budget, £49,300 of revenue budget and a £10,000 contribution from Experience Guildford.

The Executive noted that Swan Lane had been included within the scope of the scheme due to the offer of a financial contribution from a group of Swan Lane landlords. AECOM, the Council's Principal Design consultants, had developed a range of costed options, based on feasibility study, but informed by the consultation with residents, businesses, visitors, councillors and council officers. The two options presented were a core scheme that was within budget and an option that captured the broader scope derived from the consultation feedback which included improvements and bespoke public realm enhancements (architectural lighting and other furniture), along with more complex interventions to address Castle Street traffic issues.

The options proposed were as follows:

Option 1: The core scheme (including Chapel Street, Castle Street) plus Swan Lane. This option excluded architectural lighting, signage and wayfinding enhancements but addresses the core elements of road surface treatments, street lighting, traffic control interventions. This could be delivered for £1.3million which was within budget.

Option 2: An enhanced scheme which would significantly improve the 'look and feel' of the public realm through integration of architectural lighting, street furniture, wayfinding, signage and a major transformation of Tunsgate junction with a large raised table that replicated the lost historic 'square'. This would cost £1.67 million. Additional funding of £367,000 would be required through a virement from the capital contingency fund.

Officers also proposed that the full capital cost of the project be funded from the New Homes Bonus (NHB) reserve, in line with the NHB policy approved by Council in February 2016. Funding the scheme from the NHB reserve would mitigate any ongoing borrowing costs on the Council's general fund revenue account from this scheme.

Both costed options included pedestrian safety barriers for the High street including new gated access for the western end of the High Street.

This matter had been considered by the Joint Executive Advisory Board at its meeting on 20 November 2019., and their comments and recommendations had been included on the Supplementary Information Sheet circulated at the Executive's meeting.

Having considered the proposals, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Option 2 be approved and that the project be progressed to detailed design and construction.
- (2) That the Director of Environment be authorised to proceed with the detailed designs in respect of the preferred option, and the Director of Finance be authorised to approve a virement from the Capital Contingency Fund up to £367,000 for this purpose.
- (3) That the full capital cost of the preferred option be funded from the Council's New Homes Bonus Reserve
- (4) That further consideration be given to road layout and design at the junction of South Hill, Sydenham Road and Castle Street to reduce traffic speeds and ease crossing by pedestrians.

Reason:

To support the Council's strategic priority of increasing Guildford town centre's economic success, increasing accessibility and improving links between the High Street and Cultural Quarter.

EX61 MIDLETON INDUSTRIAL ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT

The Executive had approved a business case for the redevelopment of the Midleton Industrial Estate on 24 January 2017, as part of the 2017-18 capital programme. The Executive considered a further report which outlined progress with the delivery of the project, including the current spend and the works completed as well as the remaining scope of works to be delivered during 2019-20 and 2020-21. The Executive was asked to approve the transfer of £5,500,000 from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme in order to complete phases two and three of the redevelopment.

The Executive RESOLVED:

- (1) That the sum of £5.5 million be transferred from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme to enable the continuation and completion of the design and construction of phase two and three of the Midleton Industrial Estate redevelopment, as detailed in the report submitted to the Executive.

- (2) That the Corporate Property Manager, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Assets, be authorised to progress the design and construction of phase two and three.

Reason:

To progress the next phases of redevelopment of Midleton Industrial Estate to enhance both the capital value and rental income of the Council's property holding.

EX62 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY MANAGEMENT - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE

On 23 July 2019, the Council had adopted a motion to declare a Climate Emergency, along with urgent actions, including to reach a target goal of net zero emissions by 2030, working with partners towards a carbon-free borough and establishing a local Climate Change Partnership.

The Executive was asked to consider a supplementary estimate to cover the costs of the staff resource and a contribution to the Salix reserve fund to deliver the Council's corporate climate change objectives and energy management of its property assets. To support this work during 2019-20, funding for the current staff resources was required in addition to the existing budget allocation.

The Executive noted that, if approved, the proposals would be the first step in the Council working towards meeting its ambition.

The Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a supplementary estimate of £25,000 (including on-costs) be approved in addition to the existing budget to cover the staff resource.
- (2) That a contribution of £217,000 be made from the Council's Invest to Save reserve into the Salix reserve in 2019-20 to be match funded by Salix.

Reason:

To provide the essential staff resources and funding to deliver and support the Council's Corporate Climate Change strategy and targets.

EX63 SELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR 2020-21

The Executive considered a report on nominations received for election of Mayor and appointment of Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2020-21. The constitutional changes adopted by the Council as part of the review of the Civic function in April 2014 in respect of the Mayoralty provided that the Council would normally elect the Deputy Mayor appointed at the annual meeting of the Council as Mayor at the next succeeding annual meeting.

The Executive noted that, although political group leaders had been asked to submit nominations in respect of the Deputy Mayoralty for 2020-21, none had been received.

It was suggested that an informal gathering for councillors interested in becoming Mayor could be held where the experiences and advice of past Mayors could be shared with potential candidates.

The Executive therefore

RECOMMEND: That the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley be nominated for the Mayoralty of the Borough for the municipal year 2020-21.

The Executive further

RESOLVED: That, in the absence of any nominations for the Deputy Mayoralty for the municipal year 2020-21, further consideration be given to the matter at the Council meeting on 5 February 2020.

Reason:

To make early preparations for the selection of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2020-21.

EX64 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Executive

RESOLVED:

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 for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.”

EX65 PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL-OWNED PROPERTY IN GUILDFORD

The Executive considered a report on the proposed disposal of a Council owned property in Guildford. The report had set out details of the property, including its location, and its recent letting.

The report had also referred to an Options Appraisal in respect of the potential future uses of the site. The site had also been through a full marketing campaign on an ‘any offer’ basis and details of the bids received were appended to the report. In order to ensure that the Council was able to meet its best value obligations, the Executive

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Corporate Property Manager be authorised to take such actions as are required to improve the bids received in terms of price and deliverability and to negotiate detailed terms for the disposal of the Council-owned property in Guildford referred to in this report submitted to the Executive in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Finance and Asset Management, the Managing Director, the Director of Community Services and Chief Finance Officer to ensure that the Council meets its best value obligations.
- (2) That the ring-fencing of the sale proceeds within the provisional capital programme for future re-investment in a better investment property, be approved.

Reasons:

Disposing of the property would allow the Council to reinvest the capital receipts in better property investments and remove the current difficulties and the potential future risks associated with this property whilst capturing the best consideration available in today’s market.

EX66 LEASE OF PROPERTY IN TOWN CENTRE

The Executive considered a report on the proposed lease of a Council owned property in Guildford town centre. Councillors noted the principal terms of the proposed lease, which would not only improve the building (by way of refurbishment) and its immediate environment, but also provide an increased financial return on investment.

The transaction would involve the Council contributing a sum towards the cost of the refurbishment, which would be recovered through an enhanced rental stream. This contribution would be made by way of a virement from the capital contingency fund.

The Executive

RESOLVED: That the principal terms of the proposed lease, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report submitted to the Executive, be approved.

The Executive further

RECOMMEND:

- (1) That the sum of £2.5 million be vired from the capital contingency fund to enable the lease to be completed.
- (2) That the sum of £36,000 be vired from the budget pressures reserve to cover the associated purchaser costs.

Reasons:

To secure a longer-term income stream and assist with the regeneration of this part of the town centre.

The meeting finished at 8.27 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date